WARBECK OF WOLFSTEIN.

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WARBECK OF WOLFSTEIN.

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La fin couronne les œuvres.



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CHAPTER I.

"Qui perd pêche."

THE news of the dispersion of Count Casimir of Vallensteïn's noble retinue was quickly buzzed through Vienna: fierce yagers, splendid liverymen, well-trained grooms, were wandering masterless, seeking new employment; and even the fine horses and splendid equipages of their late lord, which had been unreservedly shared amongst them, were now offered to the most liberal buyer for sale.

At the levee of the day which saw the departure of Vallensteïn, no other subject was discussed. The Emperor did not

appear, and the countenance of the Empress still bore the traces of the shock of the preceding evening. Princess Stolberg absented herself on the plea of indisposition, careless at that moment of the guesses and rumours to which her conduct might give birth. Her imperial mistress was well acquainted with the partial kindness she professed for him whose departure, and its singular manner, was at that moment the theme of all tongues, and accorded her every indulgence; while the Princess internally resolved, as soon as she could in some degree recover the agitation which now overwhelmed her, to lay her heart and its secrets at the feet of her benevolent Sovereign, since the weight was more than even her high spirit could sustain alone, and to solicit or accept the sympathy of a less exalted mind was not in her nature.

The word "disgrace" was wafted in whispers through the state apartment; for as the illustrious lady who presided did not in any way allude to her late

favourite, no one dared to utter his assertions or conjectures aloud.

Count Harrach entered in all the parade and splendor of his newly acquired military distinction, in a full and magnificent uniform, decorated by orders and medals, and all the brilliant appendages which a long probation at court had acquired for him. Big with the theme of the hour, his countenance betrayed a double share of sapient meaning, and as his mind usually contented itself with a freightage of one idea at a time, it did not occur to him that any subject, save the one of which he groaned to be delivered, could be discussed, much less did a single doubt assail him, that it actually laboured under a tacit prohibition.

Those who would not themselves hazard breaking the silence of which the Empress gave them the example, rejoiced at the sight of the pompous, garrulous uncle of Vallensteïn, who, having knelt and kissed the hand of his mistress, and found himself

once more on his feet, cast upon her a speaking look full of wistful inquiry, which receiving no answer, he was compelled to utter forth his sole idea, since, like the helmet of, Otranto, it was become too large for the mansion; however, he was courtier enough to discern that it was necessary to come to his point by a circuitous route.

"May I presume, madam," said he, "to express to your Imperial Majesty those contradictory emotions which assail me at this moment. In saluting your Majesty's fair hand, I could almost weep to think how long it may be ere my knee shall again be bent in this presence."

"You are then summoned to the army, Count Harrach?"

"My illustrious brother has put my services into instant requisition, and the idea that I may be permitted to perish in the cause of my imperial master, alone consoles me for an exile from the sunshine in which I have long ripened. To-mor-

row, madam, I set forth, and hope, ere my return, that this hitherto unspotted sword will have drank deep of the blood of your Majesty's enemies. There is, no doubt, something inspiring to a man of mettle in riding forth to the battle, and I would fain at this moment have preserved my mind clear and unclouded by any sinister event; but, really, the mysterious circumstances attending my nephew's departure—a youth indeed of very plausible manners, at least to the eye of natural affection it appeared so, has somewhat dismayed,—that is, has cast ra-ather a damp upon my feelings."

The Empress made no reply; but, as the blame of having broken the silence which had hitherto prevailed throughout the assembly would rest exclusively with Count Harrach, many individuals now flocked around him, and besieged him on all sides with questions.

"I suspected," said he, with an air of penetration, "I suspected sometime ago

how matters stood. The late despatches of my very dear and illustrious brother have never once named this ill-starred youth :— to me it pleased him to be precise in his orders, and it would have been natural, you know, to have made me the medium of communication, occasionally with his son; —but no, my credentials came singly, and his name never appeared in them: of course, to a man of any acuteness; a man practised in extracting meanings and forming conclusions, it appeared ra-ather suspicious—nay, indeed, very suspicious; —at least, I have thought so since."

His audience were too eager for information to comment on the singular quality of Count Harrach's foresight.

"I have heard," said Count Markoff very seriously, "that in consequence of Baroness Marchfeldt's rejection, he has quarrelled with the world, and that he is gone into a monastery of Carthusians, at the top of a Bohemian mountain: if it be true, I am sure it is ten thousand pities."

"An idle tale, an idle tale, rely upon it, Count. No, no, you should not lend an ear to such unfounded rumours."

"You, Count Harrach," said Markoff, modestly, "are, no doubt, better informed."

"A proud, dissatisfied spirit, sir, rely on it,—a greedy and boundless ambition;—look to that, sir, and you will trace this matter to its source at once, I believe. I have reason to know, that is, I have a right to conjecture, that my most illustrious brother has found him a headstrong youth, an unmanageable, froward-spirited lad, sir;—wayward, sir—wayward from his very cradle. The deduction is plain: the Duke of Friedland has offered him a command, such perhaps as he deems proportioned to his years and abilities; and he, forsooth, rating himself at a higher standard, scorns the tender, defies his most illustrious parent, renounces all the compatibilities, all the decencies of his station, and—but this is a hint which

came to me in a delicate manner—it is only amongst friends that I would breathe the most remote suspicion of such a thing: I have had a notion suggested to me, that he is actually gone to join the desperate banditti who have established their dens amid the ravines of the Carpathian mountains. My heart bleeds to the centre for my illustrious brother."

The majority of voices were at once upraised in a chorus of wonder and reprobation, while a few only hazarded a doubt of the accuracy of this afflicted uncle's intelligence: amongst these few Lindau stood foremost.

"Impossible, sir!" said he: "that the ambition of Count Casimir may have been piqued and disappointed; even that his expectations were extravagant, and his father's limitations just, and that he may have surrendered up his reason to a temporary fit of vexation, *is* within the scope of belief; although, judging from the few observations I have been able to

make on his temper, I do not believe it: but that Casimir of Vallenstein will ever become the companion of a horde of robbers,—I should smile at such an insinuation, but that the source from whence the scandal emanates, excites a deeper feeling than can express itself in smiles."

"Well, sir," replied Count Harrach, indignantly, "take your own view of the matter, and time shall be our umpire; but if a man acts the extravagant part my nephew has done, conjecture *will* be busy;—he may be insane,—not that on his mother's side it is traceable in the blood.—But, sir, perhaps you are ignorant that of the princely retinue with which my illustrious brother sent him hither he has dismissed every man, except that gruff lieutenant, who always looked as if he was going to sabre somebody. His noble stud, and his costly equipages, are left as perquisites of these menials; and I have just been so fortunate to purchase, for a mere trifle, two of his finest chargers.

It was a lucky opportunity to befall me just on going to camp; though, if my nephew had had a grain of consideration, he would have presented me with them, having no farther occasion for them himself; indeed, it rà-ather hurt me to pày for things which ought in a manner to have belonged to me."

"Certainly," said Lindau, with unrestrained contempt, "it must have been very painful."

"I should not," said the honest Count Markoff, "have suspected him to possess such a fierce, headstrong temper: there always seemed to me, on the contrary, a sort of genuine, native courtesy about him, peculiar to himself."

"Bless me, sir, you surprise me!—I am sure nothing could exceed *my* attentions to him; and, setting that apart, our nearness of blood, and my established character, ought to have weighed with him; yet you cannot conceive to what pungent, abrupt replies I have been subject from

him. Believe me, there was something innately ruffian in him; and, *on the whole*, I am not sorry he has shown himself. Every one knows how he treated poor Baron Rosebec, than whom a better-natured young man does not exist.—Really, his behaviour was most unprovoked and outrageous; for the worst that can be said of Rosebec is, that he is ra-ather thoughtless, and, considering the disparity of his age with that of my respected friend the Baroness, every allowance should be made for him; besides, to interfere in a wager is downright brutal, an infringement on the laws of civil society, as I told my nephew;—indeed, my representations on the subject were so strong, that I did induce him to take the forfeiture on himself."

"Oh, monstrous!" exclaimed Lindau, turning away in disgust.

"It is impossible not to feel an interest in him," said Markoff: "I should like to know what is become of him, poor fellow!"

Lindau echoed the wish with a sigh—"I cannot think that the true motive of his conduct has even been hinted at," said he; but what it really is surpasses my penetration. Tired of this courtly dawdling, I am resolved to make trial of my own mettle. I should like to ascertain, for my own satisfaction, if I have confidence enough to face a discharge of cannon, so I asked young Vallensteïn for a post: he frankly disclaimed all influence, declared that he was himself without station or promotion, and that in case he served it would be as a volunteer:—his accent and his countenance had a tinge of grief in them, but nothing of resentment."

"Is it possible, Margrave," said Count Harrach, who had lent an ear to the conversation, "that you are not aware of the hidden meaning of the word volunteer? Upon my honour, sir, volunteer is a phrase often used instead of bandit—I can hardly conceive you to be ignorant of the frequently synonymous acceptation

of these terms; but I cannot express the mortification I feel in hearing that you incline to the service, when every post in my regiment is filled. Applicants pressed so rapidly upon me, I had scarcely time for breathing: natural enough, you know, sir, considering my nearness in blood and affection to the illustrious Generalissimo:—but let us not despair—I make no doubt that, even yet, a request of mine—"

"What, Lindau!" cried Wolfsteïn, "are you ambitious of winning your spurs? I will write to the Duke:—equip yourself with all despatch in the interim: you shall be in a week appointed to a vacant regiment."

Count Harrach had now no occasion for any verbal expression of mortification; his "nearness of blood and affection to the Generalissimo" would not, in fact, have supplied him with courage to ask for a subaltern's post beyond his own regiment; and, albeit, partiality for cold

iron was not his leading foible: he would rather have eaten his sword than risk encountering such a repulse as he knew, from experience, his very dear and illustrious brother could bestow. He stared, stammered, and all his courtly presence of mind and address failed to conceal the natural vexation he felt at having his own weakness so glaringly contrasted with another's power; for Wolfsteïn looked on him *de haut en bas,* as though he would say, "You know very well, Count, that the sum total of your interest amounts to nothing;" and, very unwilling the look should be translated into words, he quitted the circle a somewhat less self-satisfied being than he had entered it.

"Can you be serious, Sir Warbeck?" said Lindau.

"I will send off a courier this night, I tell you; and, within a week, your commission shall be in your hands:—you shall have a picked regiment."

"Well, then," said Lindau, shaking

hands with him, "you are a fine fellow. It would be almost ungracious to ask questions; but I own you excite my wonder."

"Most likely, Lindau—I was born to excite the wonder of my contemporaries."

"I am almost as much beholden to you for crushing at a stroke that reptile, Harrach, as for my regiment: he has been treating his gallant nephew's name most scurvily."

"What of that?" said Wolfsteïn: "it is the vocation of such a sneaking cur to fawn in your face and bite your heel—you should attend to breed and character—you would not take a turnspit to a boar chase, would you?

"Young Vallensteïn," said he, exalting his voice, "is fit for a hero of romance; his breast is full of that quality called virtue, of which every one has read, but whose scarcity has rendered its existence as much a matter of question as that of the unicorn or phœnix. For Vallensteïn's sake, I grieve at heart that giants and

centaurs are exterminated, and that Saracen knights and foul magicians no longer persecute helpless, hapless females in their enchanted castles. I do verily believe that the said Chevalier is equally *sans tâche, et sans peur.*"

As he spoke, he bowed humbly to the Baroness, whose vicinity he did not sooner affect to perceive. A cold and very slight return was all he received, and more than he expected.

"Chevalier," said Lindau, "you do yourself honour in speaking thus generously of one with whom your cordiality is in doubt."

"I do not love the Count, it is true, but I admire him, and to strike at him now would reduce me to the level of his uncle, Count Harrach. No: I never judge through the medium of passion; and, when I smite an adversary, he shall see whence comes the blow."

The lady of Marchfeldt, although she preserved a cold and discouraging aspect

whenever her eyes met those of the chevalier, could not but admire the manly sentiments she heard him utter, and felt pleased that he did not condescend to join the throng who were so ready to pour all sorts of reproach and obloquy on the vanished favourite. The Empress had vouchsafed to relate to her Wolfstein's reformation, and the sacrifice of his obnoxious book, and her reply was an humble expression of incredulity.

"I fear," said her Majesty, "you are naturally of an incredulous, inflexible temper:—beware, lest you become cynical; for the air of courts is, in itself, apt to generate scepticism."

"May I presume," said Louisa blushing, "to ask, why your Majesty thus deems of me?"

"I have heard multiplied instances of your cruelty, not one of your kindness:—for the unfortunate young man," added she, lowering her voice, "who has quitted us in so mysterious a manner, the effect

of your severity on *him* was visible to every one.—Poor Lindau has improved under your discipline:—vanity was his ruling foible, and you have cured him. With respect to Wolfsteïn, I predict that the conflict will be longer in suspense. I, for my own part, exult in the hope that we are making a valuable proselyte to virtue: he has a powerful, a magnificent mind, and I should glory in such a convert; for *I* do not," said she reproachfully, "exclude from my charitable hopes, or shut my belief against, all who have deviated."

The Baroness sighed: she saw that a shade of her sovereign's displeasure rested upon her, while she was conscious that by the simple detail of her own brief story she could at once dissipate the cloud; but she had not the courage so grievously to inculpate Wolfsteïn.

"I have a strong suspicion," said the Queen, examining the changing countenance of the Baroness, "that this is a

critical moment, and that the confirmation of our new convert in his better thoughts rests in your hands:—it is a responsibility, Baroness, of some weight.—I hope you are not like the princess Tourandocte, the heroine of a Persian tale, whose glory consisted in the number of youths who died of her cruelty:—no, no, I shall live to see you rejoicing in a worthier triumph."

"Trust me, your Majesty is deceived, —not the slightest communication exists between Sir Warbeck and myself."

"Because you have quarrelled;—but the quarrels of lovers are not irremediable. I will deal candidly with you, Baroness:—I am not ignorant of the scene in the Mermaid's grotto:—that it came to me unexaggerated I will not assert, for you are beautiful and charming, and the evil eye of envy cannot select a fairer mark;—private meetings of so intimate and agitating a nature, contrasted with apparent and public disavowal, give more scope than could be

wished to the speculations of the censorious.—Nay, Baroness," said the Empress, taking her hand, as she saw the tears gathering in her eyes, "I would not distress or agitate you, but you are young, and I would guard you."

"Alas, Madam! that scene has lowered me in your Majesty's opinion; yet was it forced upon me, and no effort of mine could have rescued me from it."

"Will you answer me to one point, Baroness: when Wolfsteïn compelled you to the performance of that scene, was it the first hour of agitation that ever passed between you?—and did you not, at no distant period, smile on the chevalier?—Come, Baroness, your silence is ingenuous: I will not urge you to speak—but all this strengthens my hope, that you are destined to make Wolfsteïn good, and he is destined to make you happy."

That their union was written on the page of destiny the Lady of Marchfeldt implicitly believed; but her presages

were less bright than those of her august mistress: she had had sorrowful experience of his talent for dissembling: she had no direct cause to suppose that she was the object of his present manœuvre, for he kept modestly aloof, and it was only through the medium of a timid bow that he attempted to remind her of his presence; yet was she possessed with an internal conviction that he was, spider-like, spinning at a distance from his victim that web, in the centre whereof she would ultimately find herself entangled.

CHAPTER II.

"Ego, et Rex meus."

WITHIN the stipulated time arrived Lindau's commission, and as the army was already in motion, an order to take the immediate command of his regiment came with it. Indeed, so general was the infection of military ardour, that all the young courtiers, to the very pages of the Emperor, entreated to exchange their peaceful service for one in which peril and glory were united. All things were in preparation for a tremendous struggle, and the Duke of Friedland loudly declared that the eventful moment was at hand which must decide whether Gustavus or he should command the world. The very first steps of this great man on his resumption of power revived the hopes of the Emperor, and checked the advances

of the enemy: the Swedish hero no longer found his campaign a mere rapid, unobstructed march; he must now wrestle hard for every inch of ground: yet Ferdinand could not, while he exulted in the happy change in his affairs, help reflecting with mortification on the extravagant price at which he had bought his haughty general's return to service.—The* entire and unconditional command, not only of the imperial troops, but of the Spanish allies; the levying contributions and sub-

* Waldstein had learned by experience the difficulty of maintaining such an elevation as that to which he was about to be raised, and adopted every expedient to prevent a second dismission. Amidst all his eagerness for command he affected an indifference and reluctance which enabled him to enhance his terms, and impose more effectual shackles on his sovereign. Notwithstanding the invitation of the Emperor, he refused to repair to court, but advanced to Znaim, in Moravia, with a view to facilitate his arrangements. He indignantly rejected the proposal to command under the Archduke Ferdinand, with the impious declaration, that he would not serve under God himself.—Coxe's Hist. of the House of Austria, vol. i. part 2. chap. liv. page 869.

sidies at his own free and unquestioned discretion; and when the Emperor proposed that the Archduke, his eldest son, might have the nominal command, the brief and impious reply of this most presumptuous man was, "I will not serve even under God." The Duke of Friedland's mind had undergone a wonderful change during the period of his short retirement; he looked on the temporary disgrace as a mere necessary link in the chain of his destiny, yet he resented it deeply, bitterly, and eternally.—From the hour when he disbanded his army all faith and trust in his fellow creatures was renounced, and he adopted, and pertinaciously maintained, the idea, that mankind could only be securely bound by awe and apprehension:—from the highest to the lowest of his dependants, from the sovereign who courted his aid to the centinel who kept watch at his door, this stern and melancholy theory invariably governed his practice. Fer-

dinand now learned to tremble at the unlimited powers of this uncontrollable spirit; but it was to his sovereign's dread, not to his love, the Duke of Friedland aspired: amongst his own troops death or infamy were common retribution, and the zealous devotion with which he was beheld by the immense multitude which obeyed him, served to justify his oppressive system.

"Psha!" exclaimed he, when any one ventured a remonstrance on the danger of driving men to desperation, "the beloved and clement Cæsar surrendered his life under the daggers of assassins,—the abhorred and blood-dropping Sylla breathed it forth gently on his bed:—the one was murdered by the men he had forgiven, the other spared by those whose fathers, sons, and brothers, he had destroyed, and whose own souls he had crushed and trodden to the dust!"

A wicked and dangerous empiric, the Jesuit Fieramosca, was the only human

creature of whom he took counsel: this man was passionately addicted to the practice of those mysterious sciences from a belief in whose arcana few minds were entirely exempt.—By his experiments he succeeded in confirming his patron in the one day certain accomplishment of those visions of glory which were ever swimming before his mental sight. As the decree by which these things were to come to pass was pronounced, and irreversible, the Duke founded his stern, disdainful, unbending deportment on that principle.

"Why," he would say, "should I court beings who can neither advance nor impede my progress?—destiny will inevitably dispose them so as they must co-operate for my advantage, and I am free to use them meanwhile as it pleases me; they are no doubt placed within the grasp of my power for that purpose."

As for the Jesuit, he had tampered with these delusive secrets until their

jargon was become habitual to him, but it would be difficult to believe that he did actually accord to these gloomy unlawful mysteries that implicit faith which he exacted from his pupils, or that his imagination was so far infected by his studies as to present before him, and compel within his circle, those powers of the air over which he professed to exercise a limited and temporary jurisdiction. That such power did exist, and that Fieramosca possessed it, was the creed of a man who gloried in his scepticism:—here was the confine of his proud and grasping intellect:—he refused to credit the most simple, self-evident, and accepted truths, yet he yielded himself up, unresistingly, to the weak wild fablings of a subtle charlatan:—he gloried in the universal mistrust in which he held his fellow beings, and yet he surrendered the whole stores of his copious bosom to the investigation of as crafty and evil a spirit

as ever inhabited the human form. But to return to our interests at Vienna.

Wolfstein found himself delivered from all those competitors and observers, who, though beneath his fear or jealousy, might have crossed or harassed his proceedings. The Margrave of Lindau, no longer blinded by vanity, and occupied by himself, might have proved troublesome, and he had accomplished two objects at once in obtaining his regiment,—he removed a man whose absence he desired, and he exhibited a convincing proof of his power with the great dispenser of profits and honours, which gave him a weight at court, such as he had never before possessed. Ferdinand condescended to make him the medium of different promotions, and it was seen clearly that his word had incredible potency with the Duke of Friedland. In proportion as the Emperor became obliged to Wolfstein, the anxiety that his conversion might prove genuine and stable in-

creased: and as it is not difficult to reconcile our creed with our inclination, every day seemed to lend this charitable and christian hope fresh colour. No one had really a peep behind the mask but Princess Stolberg, and she dared not betray her suspicions; with her the Chevalier affected a friendly and unceremonious familiarity, which present circumstances rendered inexpressibly galling.—He had overheard her conversation with Vallensteïn, had witnessed the emotion which accompanied it; it was painful and humiliating to meet his eye at any rate, but to read in that eye, whenever it dwelt upon her, a studied expression of insolent pity, was intolerable: yet was she compelled to endure it.—She could not, by any sophistry, gloss over the fact to herself, that she had made a voluntary confession of love to one, who would not, could not, return it, and that her pride had so far deserted her, that even the repulse and rejection of her

affection did not rally it.—No ingenuity, thought she, can warp this tale to my credit, and if Wolfstein relates it, it will have every addition that malice can afford it. She resolved to confide her weakness to the sympathy of the Empress, and to enable herself, in that quarter at least, to defy the enemy: nor did she misplace her confidence; they wept together over the hurried farewell of poor Casimir, and the Empress repeated with pleasure and wonder the words, "I go forth laden with sorrows and iniquities, but only half the burthen is my own." To whom then might the other half appertain? That was a question to whose solution their mutual penetration was unequal.

"One thing, however," said the Empress, "is clear and manifest; the breast which harboured the generous, tender sentiments expressed in that letter, could never lend room to a dark, implacable spirit of wrath towards the author of his being:—the unhappy mystery may be

long in developing, but whenever it comes to light, the honour of Casimir Vallensteïn will be justified."

Unfortunately, as Princess Stolberg now found it, when Wolfsteïn first made his appearance at court, in all the pride of his audacious singularity, she, carried away by high spirits and vanity, and pleased to find herself the exclusive theme of his warbled flatteries, allowed him in return for this seductive homage a degree of familiarity for which those who envied her the fragrant incense which burned upon her altar were eager to censure and condemn her.—It was a league, however, in which vanity alone was concerned:—she loved to hear herself flattered in such incomparable strains, and he delighted in being told by so lovely and brilliant a woman that the strains were incomparable. They were almost constantly inseparable, not because each had any real attachment to the other, but because each loved

and admired themselves. This tacit compact, however, gradually relaxed, for the Princess, on her side, felt herself revolted, in spite of fashion, by some of the daring impieties of her colleague: while he, naturally fickle, wearied even of the piquante Princess, began, for the love of variety, to enlist his transcendant muse in the celebration of less conspicuous charms.—It was true, besides, that the unqualified and monotonous applause with which the public fed their monstrous idol became at length ridiculous in the ears of Madame de Stolberg:—thus, without any actual breach, the distance between them grew imperceptibly wider, and Wolfsteïn, with all his affected nonchalance, could not save himself from a secret pang of vexation when he heard that the wit and irony of this lively lady had been frequently directed against those of his followers who seemed to have no other business on earth than to feed his already bloated vanity by their indiscriminate

and servile worship. He rallied in turn, and all was outwardly well: but, in the meanwhile, the offender was entered on his proscribed list against the day of retribution,—a period which was now arrived, and the poor Princess, unknown to any but herself and her tormentor, was doing rigorous penance.

One day that the Empress held her levee, the Chevalier entered, and with that chastened expression, which since his professed reformation he had thought proper to adopt, he approached her Majesty, and having performed his salutations, laid on her footstool an elegant MS., saying,

"At length, madam, my pen has poured forth lays whose tendency at least will ensure your gracious reception of them."

Theodore raised it from its humble station, and placed it in her hand, when she saw with delight that it was a paraphrase of some of the most striking pas-

sages in sacred writ, executed with that exquisite pathos and sublimity, which never failed to adorn even his most exceptionable verse: they had been set to appropriate music by one of the most eminent masters of that period, and the notes were interleaved with the subject they were adapted to accompany. The Empress expressed, in the most affectionate and encouraging terms, the gratification with which she accepted this promising token.

"Now, indeed," said she, "you are turning your talent to account; for if ever human intellect may presume to glory, it is when it consecrates itself to such hallowed uses. Persuade one of your fair friends to accompany some of these beautiful anthems with her lute; I am impatient to hear if the music does them justice."

"From *you* they will derive redoubled force and pathos," said he, addressing Princess Stolberg, "you, who have im-

parted such seductive expression to far other breathings of the same muse; vouchsafe, lady, to lend your enchanting voice to her holier inspiration."

The Princess was wofully changed since her agitating and decisive conference with Casimir; her spirits were fled beyond reach of an effort; she was pale and silent, and the consciousness that a secret so humiliating was so insecurely lodged, kept her in constant trepidation.

"Spare me, Wolfsteïn," she said, "I cannot sing: my voice has lost its power of late;—indeed, I shall ruin the effect both of the lines and the music."

"Oh yes, you *will* sing, Princess," replied he, with a soft, entreating voice, but with a look which she well understood to mean you *shall* sing.—"Your spirits," added he, with insulting gentleness, "want reviving—I must bring you to your old habits, and you shall thank me for it. Time, time will cure all this, but we must aid him;—besides, you, who were so fond of warbling that little naughty-

canzonet of mine to Myra, cannot refuse to encourage the first steps of a reclaimed libertine. Oh yes, you *will* sing, Princess!"

This was hard to endure, but there was no helping it; and, though she complied,—she could not sufficiently conceal her feelings to forbear adding to the triumph of her wily enemy;—she snatched the book angrily from his hand, and having tuned her lute, and run over a prelude, to which her very agitation lent expression, she burst forth into the song with a force and energy which arrested the admiration of her whole audience, but it was an overpowering effort; in a moment her voice sunk, her bosom throbbed, and her cheek flushed with intense crimson, while tears of indignation for the unmanly compulsion she had suffered, forced their way into her eyes.

"Princess, you are ill," said the Empress, compassionately; "you should not have attempted to sing—the heat of the

room overpowers you. Pray retire, and try the effect of air."

Her persecutor again approached, and taking the hand she dared not withdraw, led her with an air of the most soothing attention from the apartment, every one admiring the manly suavity of his manners. He led her to the entrance of her own suite in silence, then

"Princess," said he, "take a friend's advice:—I know that nothing implants so bitter a pang in the tender breast of woman as the scorn of a beloved object; —there is but one cure,—set your vanity on some other conquest—repulse in one instance should not discourage you,—you have ample time before you; but, upon my soul, if you go on in this style, premature wrinkles, faded roses, and gray hairs, are at hand, and you will be consigned to cards, scandal, ratafia, devotion, and all the stimulants which remain to render life endurable to a tarnished beauty."

Thus saying, he left her, and retraced his steps towards the apartment of the

Empress. The lute and open MS. lay upon the table: her Majesty, in regretting the indisposition of her lady of the key, expressed her disappointment likewise in being deprived of her vocal powers, and losing the hope of hearing the sacred songs. The Baroness of Marchfeldt was the only lady present who could have undertaken them: the Empress did not otherwise refer to her than by accompanying her expressions of regret with a significant look, which was indeed a sort of tacit command. Louisa hesitated for a moment; then, with the haste of one about to perform some desperate act, she approached the table, and taking up the lute, whose chords were already tuned, poured forth a strain of such sweetness and sublimity as could not fail to soften and exalt the mind of her dullest hearer. When she ceased, the delight she inspired did not relieve itself in audible encomiums—all was for some moments silent, as if the intranced ear still hung upon the thrilling cadence; no one spoke to

her, or of her, for the feelings she excited could not be uttered; but all thronged to congratulate Wolfsteïn, and no one sympathized more cordially in his conversion and success than Professor Westermann.

The almost voluntary performance of his song by Louisa of Marchfeldt seemed like a dream to the Chevalier; the utmost stretch of his vanity would not have promised him such a triumph. She had often sung to him, and often had he hung over her song with the most absorbing rapture; but he believed that now, for the first time, he heard that angel voice to perfection; and, in truth, the emotion of her heart as she sung the words of Wolfsteïn—words betokening a purified and repentant spirit, lent a tremulous magic to her music, such as it had never owned before. He ventured not yet to speak to her; but his hand shaking with undissembled agitation, he turned the leaves till he opened them at a hymn, which he secretly considered the *chef d'œuvre* of his muse.

"Do you wish me to sing it, Chevalier," said Louisa,—He made no answer, and, save with his eyes, he spoke not; but the Baroness resumed the lute, and poured forth the selected strain with, if possible, improved brilliancy; for the embarrassment with which she began had subsided, and she was become mistress of her powers—powers incalculably heightened by devotional enthusiasm, mingled with the still softer feelings of human attachment. In short, song after song was executed, till nearly the whole book was exhausted.

To Louisa's heart that hour had proved decisively fatal; and, for the Chevalier, he would have bartered half his life for such a moment, which was rendered still more precious to him by the unexpected curtailment of that suspense, which, however confident he might be as to its termination, he had prepared himself to endure some time longer. Again, as at Marchfeldt Castle, he became wholly absorbed by one tyrannical sentiment, and

all the subtlety of his nature was employed in restraining the impetuous and premature expression of his intense admiration. The book was closed, and the pent up applause now burst its fetters, each expressing their delight in the characteristic language of the individual.

The Baroness sate with downcast eyes, receiving the universal homage.

"For my part," said the Empress to Wolfsteïn, "I recommend you, Chevalier, to let no voice destroy the impression the Baroness has left upon our hearts of your hymns—no other music can do them justice."

"No, madam," said he, with undisguised emotion, "my own impulse is but seconded by your Majesty's suggestion; —no other voice shall ever sing them!"

"Baroness," said the Empress, "we must prevail on you to indulge us once again; the Emperor must hear those hymns, and we will meet here to-morrow evening?"

"Chevalier, look at this passage," said

Louisa, "I am not sure that I gave it the true expression. Did I not sing it somewhat too slow?"

Smothering in his own breast the joy which this little token of encouragement gave him, he approached, and bent over the book.

"'Perfection," murmured he, "must be lost on him who could find a fault in your delivery of that passage. You see, madam, Professor Krantz was doubtful of the precise expression, and has left it *ad libitum*, but from henceforth there remains no doubt."

His subdued air and faltering voice were skilfully employed; Louisa found her firmness giving way,—she turned over the leaves of the book till she paused at a duet;—"Is this equal to the rest, Sir Warbeck?" asked she.

"I believe, madam, Professor Krantz calls it the pride of the collection."

"Then we will try it, if you please, to-morrow evening."

These few words were uttered in a

hurried voice, and without looking up,—"Madam,—pardon me,—I am not sure I understand you."

"We will sing this duet together, Wolfsteïn."

And rising, she approached her Majesty with a petition that the sacred melodies might be entrusted to her care till the following evening, as she wished to practise them, in order that they might have every advantage in her power to give them on the morrow's performance: the request was promptly accorded, and the Empress whispered,

"You are all I wish, Baroness; your conduct this morning is no less honourable to your sense and feeling than to your talents—I would have no coquettes about me."

Louisa blushed and sighed; she felt but too powerfully the intimate correspondence which subsisted between the well-meant suggestions of her imperial mistress and her own weakness; for,

while she found herself yielding to the latter, and creeping at every step closer to the brink of the precipice, her internal misgivings were not silent, and the secret voice was there with its incessant warning. Beware of Wolfsteïn. Her affection for this fearful being, or else, the fatality which she believed persecuted her on his behalf, had now, as she expected it sooner or later would, gained the advantage over the cautious and practised coldness in which she had intrenched herself; she could not reflect without doubting, and therefore, arrived at this crisis, she resolved not to think at all.

"It is plain," said she to herself, "that whether happiness or unhappiness awaits me from Wolfsteïn's hand, I must receive the cup."

When the royal circle dispersed, the Chevalier, with the same modesty of demeanour which had hitherto pleaded his cause so eloquently, offered to take her hand with well-dissembled fear that even

yet it might be repulsed; but she permitted him to lead her to her equipage; and, as he did not mean to confine himself to this tedious pantomime longer than necessary, he hazarded a slight pressure of her hand as he placed her in her carriage, and no apparent resentment was awakened by the presumption.

Louisa spent many hours in singing over and over the hymns and anthems of Wolfsteïn, an exercise admirably calculated to drown the intruding thoughts which persisted to harass her. While she was thus employed, her venerable Confessor entered, and, being a warm amateur of sacred music, expressed his delight at this unequalled collection. It was long since he had heard the name of the author pronounced by her lips, and when in reply to his question she said, "The words are by the Chevalier Wolfsteïn—the music by Professor Krantz;" he started and crossed himself.

"Wolfsteïn!" he exclaimed, "Holy Mother, what sacrilegious mockery!"

For, though his pure mind was unsoiled by the perusal of any of the works of this distinguished infidel, yet his brother ecclesiastics had made him acquainted with their tenor, and he was accustomed to hear them, by those with whom he associated, reprobated and denounced.

"How, father," said Louisa, "surely it is not the gentle, pious Felix, who so glaringly deviates from his constant maxims and general practice, as to condemn a fellow-mortal to hopeless reprobation. Wolfstein has seen and mourned over his errors, father, and these hymns are the first fruits of his blessed change." She selected one distinguished by its affecting pathos: "Read this, and afterwards doubt if you can! Can the energy of those expressions come from a feigning spirit?"

"In truth, my child," said the good man, evading her question, "if it *be* feigning, the serpent which deluded our first parents, and has since betrayed many of their short-sighted race, hath a part in him."

"Methinks, father," observed Louisa, impatiently, "your belief is less easy than it is wont to be, and your charity less spontaneous.—Little should I have expected from you this harsh and repulsive treatment of the returning prodigal."

"The Virgin forbid, my child, that I should diminish in mercy and charity, as the hour advances when I must need them for myself; but, recollect, that it was this man who first taught me to fear dissemblers."

"Well, father, I have not forgotten the past, nor have I rashly, or without examination, lent my belief to his conversion. While all others concurred to assist and encourage his happy reformation, I alone stood aloof, and with chilling forbiddance held him at a distance, even to the displeasure of our gracious Empress."

"Haply, my child," said Felix, calmly, "her imperial Majesty knew not the cit-

cumstances which rendered it *impossible* for you to depart from your reserve to that man."

"Oh, certainly," echoed the Baroness, "it *was* impossible: but, as for nourishing implacable resentment, were I inclined to it, you have taught me it is a crime."

"My child," exclaimed Felix, with mournful tenderness, "take care of thyself. It is not incompatible with any gospel precept for the lamb to mistrust the wolf."

"You are prejudiced, dear father; tarry with me, and I will try," said she, smiling, "to mollify your spirit—you have certainly been poring over some of the most crabbed of the fathers, and imbibing their gloomy severities;—you have been amusing yourself with studying anathemas, interdicts, and excommunications? Is it not so?" And with the pleading, coaxing playfulness of one who dare not trust her cause to argument, she drew his chair beside her, and relying on

the prevalent effect of harmony on the feelings of the good man, she soon wrapt his senses in that enthusiastic delight with which she knew the subject and the music would certainly inspire him.

"Well," said he, with a deep sigh, as she ended, "I trust it *is* real. He is the first convert whose sincere adoption of virtue I have ever presumed to doubt. The Virgin grant him truth and faith, and forgive my failure in charity!" And he devoutly kissed the Agnus which hung upon his bosom. Indeed he had little skill to defend himself against appearances, and it was only his vigilant anxiety for the happiness of his beloved charge that supplied him with tact sufficient to pause for an instant on the reality of the Chevalier's vocation.

CHAPTER III.

"Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile;
And cry, content, to that which grieves my heart;
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I can add colours to the cameleon;
Change shapes with Proteus, for advantages,
And set the murd'rous Machiavel to school."

The following evening, the same circle re-assembled in the apartments of the Empress, with the addition of his Imperial Majesty. Princess Stolberg, who deemed herself somewhat more secure when she learned how the attention of her persecutor was likely to be monopolized, ventured to join the assembly, and was in close waiting on her royal mistress, from whose side she was immoveable, in the hope of being protected from any repetition of insult. Nevertheless the malice of

Wolfsteïn was of too subtle and pervading a quality to be easily eluded;—immediately on offering his duteous salutations to his Sovereigns, he turned to her, and, with the softness of accent he so well knew how to assume, inquired after her health, and added, "Have you considered my advice, Princess?"

"How, Chevalier," said Ferdinand, "do you number medicine amongst your various gifts?"

"May it please your Majesty, I prescribe sometimes for the fairer moiety of the creation, who take counsel with more docility than ours. My sweet friend has every claim on my gratitude—*she* was the first to hail the return of one who had too long wandered—*she* was my sponsor, and by her intercession I won my way to the feet of my gracious mistress. I can never forget," said he, with a look which no one, save the Princess, could interpret, "who was the first to lend her gentle credence to Wolfsteïn's sincerity."

Provoked by his barbarous mockery of her unfortunate credulity, she remained silent; words of retort or resentment she dared not hazard, and others she would not deign to address to him. Louisa of Marchfeldt was somewhat surprised, and not altogether pleased, by the close and exclusive attention the Chevalier was paying to one whose wit and beauty had long constituted her the reigning belle of the court circle. She observed that his eye was riveted to her countenance, which underwent a succession of changes, with a strong but indefinable expression; she recollected that Wolfsteïn had the preceding day compelled her, with gentle force, to attempt his anthems; and she began now to account, by a thousand strained conjectures, for the uncontrollable agitation which disabled her from continuing the song, and obliged her to quit the assembly; nor had she forgotten the words uttered long ago by Lindau, "To whom did he dedicate his verses? For

whom did he bring honey from Mount Hymettus, if not for you, Princess?"

Wolfstein was not blind to the cautious, stolen glance, which from time to time reconnoitred his position; and, while he gratified his innate malignity on one victim, he rejoiced in the conviction that he was at the same moment more inextricably entangling another in his net. He had, on the entrance of the Baroness, addressed to her a graceful, yet diffident bow, as if he had not confidence to presume on the intercourse of yesterday; and, having so done, returned to his conversation with the Princess, in which the Empress occasionally mingled, and never, *to appearance*, cast a second glance towards her: but the Chevalier was better furnished both with eyes and ears than other men, and few things past near him which could escape his observation. At length, the Empress reminded him of the purpose which had assembled them, and, looking with an air of regret, which

he took care should be conspicuous, on Madame de Stolberg, he said,

"I must leave you, and even the gratification of a poet's vanity hardly repays me for the sacrifice."

"No," said the Princess, in a suppressed tone, "because your vanity, overweening as it is, is secondary to your malice."

He took up the lute, and approaching the Baroness of Marchfeldt, "Her Majesty, Madam," said he, "has commanded me to request a repetition of your goodness of yesterday."

'Nay, Chevalier,' said the Baroness, "you know I acted but as the substitute for Madame de Stolberg ;—I am willing to aid, but should be sorry to usurp."

"Ah, ha! the poison works!" thought he: "But the Princess is indisposed, or she lacks skill, or she lacks kindness; for yesterday her consent was only won by much importunity, and you witnessed the result of the essay. She is well aware

of the consolation which followed her retreat, and would not, I conceive, be easily tempted to provoke a comparison; besides, I cannot break my vow,—no voice, save one, shall ever give breath to these words."

The performance was now repeated with undiminished excellence, and was followed by unqualified applause; still Louisa made no allusion to the duet, and Wolfsteïn waited with all the patience he could summon, in the hope of obliging her to be the first to propose it. But when she requested him to return her lute into its case, he began to fear lest caprice or reflection might withhold from him the luxury whose anticipation had kept his eyes waking, and of which, at all hazards, he resolved not to be deprived, the exquisite enjoyment of once more mingling his voice in the same strain with that of Louisa of Marchfeldt.

"Pardon me, madam," said he, "you are not wont to break your promises—at

least," reddening as he spoke, "not without an absolving cause; and the last words you uttered yesterday, in my hearing, were, 'Wolfstein, we will sing this together.'"

He threw so much tenderness into the tone with which he repeated her words, that she blushed at the implication, and wondered and doubted if she had indeed so spoken them. Well might he be perfect both in the phrase and accent; for, since his ear had first received them, he had gratified himself a thousand times over with the repetition.

The Baroness made no further attempt to evade the duet; and, although her heart and soul were nearly absorbed in the thought that she was once more mingling her tones with those of Wolfstein, that once more their eyes were tracing the same line, and that the icy band in which her affections had been confined was dissolving, perhaps never to freeze again, she could not forbear send-

ing a look of anxious inquiry towards the spot where Princess Stolberg stood at the elbow of her Sovereign, and was forcibly struck with the aspect of indignation with which that lady regarded the Chevalier, and nothing could differ more widely from the genuine reading of the text than her interpretation. She was convinced that the Princess loved Wolfsteïn, and that her countenance was the index to a heart stung with jealousy, while in fact it did but speak the just aversion with which that lady beheld a hypocrite profaning, with his double-tongue, the praises of his Creator, and throwing into his practised features all the illumination of a soul kindled by religious feeling. The whole assembly, meanwhile, was too deeply absorbed by the thrilling strains which enwrapped their senses to detect the sentiment, and the only one who perceived the effect misconstrued the cause. When the duet concluded, the performers were each incapable of replying to the

buzz of admiration that murmured around them. Even Wolfsteïn had lost his usual command of mind, and scarcely knew in what presence he stood. Love and his enchantments, at that moment, ruled him wholly: he was conscious, too, that his feelings were partaken; and, bending over the book, he whispered,—"Louisa, is it not sweet to sing together?"—She did not, even by a look, reply; but the effervescence of his spirits could not be restrained, and again he whispered,—"Louisa, shall we not always sing together?—Promise me;—never sing with any man but Wolfsteïn!"

"Chevalier," said she, with a serious and somewhat ambiguous air, "what are you talking of? Remember where you are, and replace my lute in its case, if you please."

He obeyed in some confusion, not knowing exactly what to make of her, and, having performed her command, he returned to her side, and found her still

turning the leaves of the book of anthems: "Have you yet, madam, detected any plagiarisms?" She smiled; "Yes, Sir Warbeck, a very flagrant one."

"I cannot deny it, and throw myself on the mercy of the fair minstrel whose sweets I have borrowed. Do you remember," said he, faltering as he trod the dangerous ground,—"do you remember with what rapture I listened as you recited to me the beautiful paraphrase from which this passage is plundered? It was on a mild, mournful, autumnal evening, as we wandered together on the banks of the Raab!—That evening, it was a happy one! Alas! many an evil one has succeeded it—some of storms and tumults, some of dreariness and desolation. Do you remember the sprig of myrtle of which you permitted me that evening to rob your bouquet? It is still in existence,—it refused to grow,—but I preserved it as the memento of days never to be for-

gotten, and as an emblem of perished hopes; for, it is dried up, withered, and discoloured."

"Forbear, Sir Warbeck! Is it for your advantage that you call up such images? *I* would forget those days. My relaxation in reserve towards you, which accident solely has occasioned, has led you perhaps into a suspicion that I had forgotten them, and you are disinterestedly averse to my losing the profit of my experience; for other motive you can have none, I presume, in recalling certain associations to my mind."

He was disconcerted, and would have given vent to his resentment, but dared not; for he dreaded to protract his period of tedious probation by any premature sally.

"I know not," said he, humbly, "how I have been betrayed into the commission of this offence—we were speaking of the paraphrase. May I venture to observe that your enchanting lines, which

have hung like a spell upon my mind, first awakened my ambition to try my success in a similar attempt, and my imagination was so imbued by them, that it could not, as you see, divest itself of the impression—hence the theft which you so easily detected. Perhaps," added he, "the frequent recurrence of my thoughts to that anthem produced within me *something better* than poetical inspiration. Perhaps, lady, the same being was destined to break my heart, and preserve my soul."

Louisa was affected. "Oh!" thought she, "that I might be the instrument of happiness to both!"

He had sounded the right key, and had penetration enough to discover as much. "Do you perceive, madam," said he, "that I have ventured to deviate somewhat from your idea? We differ, I think, on the construction of the passage, as it stands in the sacred volume; but you have meditated much on these subjects. Had I not so miserably forfeited your

indulgence, I might now have been your pupil in the loftiest of all sciences, and you might be my guide and directress in that path from which I have so widely wandered,—the path of peace.—Perhaps you would not even yet refuse to explain to me the right signification of that sentence, which my ignorance of the subject has led me to construe erroneously."

The Baroness was not insensible to this delicate flattery, though she answered with a smile,

"Upon my word, Chevalier, you have a curious idea of the best method of studying divinity. Have your metaphysics been acquired in a similar way? I fancy not; but, in truth, Chevalier, you must not look to the lips of a young lady for your instruction in these solemn matters. Search the commentaries of the fathers, who are likely to supply you with a surer clue to these mysteries."

Wolfsteïn could hardly forbear a smile at the notion, how little Thomas Aquinas was calculated to assist him in his real

pursuits, but, resolved not to be foiled; —"Well, Baroness," said he, "if *you* will not have compassion on my ignorance, at least permit him who taught you to teach me—the holy Felix. That good old man will reprove me gently, and, instead of using goad or spur, will lead me mildly forward; just such a guide I want."

The Baroness had long been aware of his uncharitable and prejudiced opinion of the majority of spiritual pastors, and was not therefore surprised at his particular election of Father Felix, the simplicity and purity of whose life formed a beautiful comment on the doctrine he taught.

"But," said she, "what will your friend, Father Joseph, who has the credit of your conversion, say to your seeking another guide?"

"My conversion was the work of an angel, and not of a capuchin. If I wished for a commentary on Machiavel, I would apply to my reverend friend. Politics

are too much mingled with his dogmas to suit my purpose. The secular occupations of Felix, as I have contemplated them, realize my notions of primitive purity; and, when I have watched him training and binding up the flowers in your parterre, feeding your birds, or rocking the cradles of the village infants, I have been led to suspect that innocence might find harbour under a friar's cowl. If such a man deceives me, I have at least the consolation of knowing it is because he is himself deceived, and that I am not the victim of deliberate duplicity."

"In the hope, Chevalier, that Father Felix will teach you better thoughts of his venerable fraternity, I will make him acquainted with your wish; and, if the strayed sheep is not secured to the fold, I will engage, at least, that he is not lost for want of a faithful shepherd."

When Louisa was once more at home, she lost no time in seeking her confessor,

and imparting the office to which she had pledged him. She related the conversation Wolfsteïn had held with her on his peculiar qualifications for it. She suspected that even the meekest bosom may have some inlet for the insinuations of vanity, and she wished, if possible, to lull to sleep, if she could not destroy, his doubts of the new proselyte's sincerity. But vanity, which dwells with all, dwelt not with him; or if he was vain, it was of his possession of a superior method of pruning vines, and his singular success in the inoculation of village children, on five hundred of whom he had in the course of his mortal pilgrimage happily performed the operation— a token of the favour of Providence on which he loved to descant as well as ever client loved to boast the countenance of an earthly patron, while the horror he entertained of being beset by the demon spiritual pride, made him repress with unfeigned aversion all encomiums on his sanctity. "My child," replied he meekly,

"what I know I will impart freely, and desire no greater blessing than to be elected the instrument of this youth's confirmation in virtue; but he has been a flagrant setter at nought of all holy ordinances and precepts, and a severe and exemplary penance, patiently complied with, should be one of the first fruits of his repentance."

The new convert was the sole occupant of Louisa's thoughts: her Bible was studied with renewed zeal, assisted by the commentaries of the most celebrated and orthodox doctors of the Church, from whom she betook herself to extracting diligently such passages as suited her purpose, abbreviating their endless sentences, and bending and softening the crabbed style into the harmony of her own periods—for she was deeply versed in the abstruse learning of the times, having shared her brother's studies, with a capacity far more fitted for their reception than her fellow-student; and as she now earnestly pored

over these dry volumes she blessed the education which had enabled her to go through her task, not only with ease, but ardour.

The day following the one on which Wolfsteïn's petition was made and granted, just as the Friar was about to go forth in search of him, he made his appearance at the Hotel Marchfeldt, and was conducted to the oratory of the holy man. Trusting to the simplicity of his confessor, he began the conference by pouring in his ears, with a grimace of contrition which he would not have hazarded in the presence of a more acute examiner, such a strange rhodomontade of faults and follies as perfectly confounded his pious auditor, who had never in the whole experience of his office heard any thing similar. Many of the errors he recapitulated were of so whimsical and fantastical a nature, that Felix began to doubt the soundness of his convert's brain.—When he had with much patience listened to

the conclusion of this perplexing detail, he gently hinted the expediency of certain acts of mortification, such as strict fasting, or temporary retirement within the walls of one of the most rigorous and self-renouncing orders. Then Wolfstein, to the infinite edification of the confessor, opened the bosom of his vest, and exhibited a cilique of the very coarsest texture, tightly fastened round his body with rough iron hooks, whose blunt points could not fail severely to bruise and lacerate the flesh, at the same time declaring himself the passive subject of whatever inflictions the holy Felix might deem advantageous to his eternal welfare. The sight of the hair-cloth, and the sound of this humble concession, had a most mollifying effect on the gentle spirit whereon they were practised. Felix, who had a great aversion to the contemplation of suffering, with his own hand loosened the hooks which pressed so barbarously on his penitent's bosom. However, he was from

experience induced to keep a check on the indulgence and suavity of his own nature, fearing lest by too much lenity he might injure the eternal hopes of his pupil, for the sake of sparing him a few days endurance.

"My son," said he, "I commend your conduct—I slacken your habit of penitence a little, lest the hook might cause a dangerous wound on your bosom, and I might have as much trouble with your body as your soul; but I advise your entrance for one month into a Carthusian monastery which I will select for you, and enjoin that during your residence therein you strictly and undeviatingly observe its rule."

"Father," replied Wolfsteïn, "my venerable friend, Father Joseph of the Capuchins, with whom I have held much discourse, has already suggested to me the expediency of such retirement, and has named me to the superior of the convent of Brothers Penitents, under

whose charge he proposed placing me for the precise term you have named, but I would prefer being guided by your direction."

"By no means, my son. You will be well placed with the Brothers Penitents: —I know not the superior, but he is no doubt worthy of his important charge."

Nothing, in short, could proceed more happily, or more amicably, than this first and decisive conference between Felix and Wolfsteïn, wherein the wolf succeeded completely in beguiling the shepherd. When verbal communications and admonitions were exhausted, the Friar produced certain ponderous and formidable tomes, wherefrom he commenced a lecture which, had his convert confessed all that was in his heart, he would have pronounced most insufferably fatiguing, and a very appropriate exordium to a scene of penance. While he sat smarting in his hair-cloth, and bearing as well as he could the tediousness

of Saint Chrysostom, &c. administered to him through the organs of Felix, the Baroness, who really was ignorant that this interesting interview had been thus long protracted, entered the oratory, with,

"Well, father, what hopes do you entertain of"—and seeing Wolfsteïn, was about to withdraw abruptly, when the lecturer, with a benign smile, cried, "Stay, my daughter:—it will not harm you to listen to precepts which cannot be too diligently studied, nor too urgently enforced."

Wolfsteïn rose from his stool and presented it to the Baroness, and, as the oratory did not abound in furniture, remained standing till the conclusion of the lecture. When it was over, Louisa apologized for an intrusion which appeared to her so indecorous. One of her errands to the cell was to consult the Friar respecting the extracts she had been employed on for the use of Wolfsteïn; and he, accus-

tomed to perform the part of critic to his beloved pupil, guessed her design, and took them from her hand.

"Your intention, my child," said he, glancing over the first essay that met his eye, "is laudable, and I doubt not well executed: I know not whether this easy pleasant method of arriving at important truths be calculated to impress them on the memory, but your pious labours shall not be lost, my child.

"Here, my son," and he presented them to Wolfsteïn, "study these when your leisure serves not for more extended labours;—they will not prove a painful exercise, and will serve you as relaxation during your abode with the Brothers Penitents."

The Baroness cast an inquiring glance at the convert, marvelling if she heard correctly, and that this wilful, head-strong being had really consented to partake the humiliations and macerations of this most austere and inflexible order.

The benign and thankful aspect of Felix answered all the mute questions she addressed to it satisfactorily. Wolfstein was taciturn, and looked sorrowful; his cheek underwent such changes of colour, and there was so much anguish in his eyes, as, finished actor as he was, he could scarcely have assumed; and the Baroness, who was not in the secret of the hair shirt, attributed the visible uneasiness to compunction for his many faults, and shame at this first confession of them. She endeavoured therefore in vain to revive and encourage his evidently fainting spirits; but even her enchanting voice and healing smile were unsuccessful. Having left a most favourable impression on those whom it was his object to deceive, he joyfully escaped, cursing internally his uneasy garment, for he was endued with small physical fortitude, although the ample and various resources of his mind enabled him to conceal the deficiency. He arrived at his own hotel in little better

temper than Hercules when he felt the fatal gift of Deianira clinging around him, but, happier than the demi-god, he divested himself, without a moment's delay, of the cause of his torment, which he trampled furiously beneath his feet, and then betook himself to anointing the lacerations inflicted on his body by the iron clasps. This he swore should be the sole corporeal penance which his speculations should cost him; at the same time exhausting himself in execrations on the ideotic fanaticism of Father Felix, nor did the fascinating cause of this voluntary smart escape her share of malediction.

On the evening of that day, the confessor, who began to take a restless interest in his convert, sought him at his home; being the bearer of a small golden crucifix, exquisitely wrought, from the Baroness, accompanied by a gift from himself of a rosary of agate beads, of which he expected incessant use would be made when his convert should be established

among the Brother Penitents; not forgetting a small vial containing a liquid, meet for the soothing and healing of such wounds as the patient might produce by his self-chastisement; for he did not question, that besides the cilique and its hooks being worn habitually, till the penance was finished, that a few lashes from a knotted cord would be occasionally resorted to by the penitent, as a stimulant to his contrition. Nothing could be more consolatory or affectionate than the admonitions of the good Father; who did not in the least deem it necessary, in the present exigency, to enjoin practices of rigour and mortification,—so impressed was he with the idea that his beloved convert was inclined rather to exceed than fall short of his wishes on the subject; and, after a conference, which Wolfstein was delighted to see draw to its close, he took leave of him, pouring on his head a torrent of prayers and benedictions.

No one who has a peep behind the

mask can suppose that Wolsteïn harboured the slightest thought of a visit to the pious fraternity whither Felix believed him bent. He knew that the superior, though enveloped in the cloak of sanctity, was a crafty, ambitious, covetous man; he had been the trusty agent of many a manœuvre of Father Joseph's, and, with two such admirable coadjutors, nothing could be easier than to evade the lulled penetration of the simple, credulous Felix. It might seem, that a whole month's exile at the present period from the sunshine of the Lady of Marchfeldt's smiles would, in itself be an insupportable penance to so impetuous a lover as Wolfsteïn; but this very impetuosity he so well appreciated, and so greatly dreaded, that even had it not proved necessary to the furtherance of his schemes, he would have invented some motive for a temporary disappearance from court. His temper was furious, and by no means at all times within the curb of his own

will: during his residence at Marchfeldt, the presence of Louisa had repeatedly proved insufficient to restrain his intemperate and brutal sallies;—the deception it now behoved him to practise required the utmost stretch of his patience and address, and he rejoiced to escape for a while where he might breathe freely, without the incumbrance of his irksome vizor.

CHAPTER IV.

> "Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers;
> Not of that dye which their investments show."
>
> *Hamlet.*

The ostensible cause of Wolfsteïn's retirement was soon murmured amongst the court circle, some of whose members were inexpressibly edified thereby; and Father Joseph, who enjoyed the credit of having worked this miracle, was considered by them as a fit object for canonisation. In the number of the credulous and confiding were both the Erdenheïms, from their habit of believing, without examination, whatever was believed by the Imperial pair whom they so faithfully served. Westermann gave it credence from an innate disposition to faith, hope, and charity: Madame de Rosebeck, because she declared it was the most inter-

esting thing imaginable to contemplate the dawnings of sanctity; and that, were it usual for female penitents to do penance in a convent of monks, she would, for the sake of making her observations on the spot, seize that opportunity to pay a visit of mortification to the Friars Penitents; more especially as it was long since she had found time for any similar exercise, and,

"You know," said she, "one really accumulates, without thinking of it, such a host of peccadilloes, one's bosom gets as full of cobwebs as a philosopher's apartment."

Princess Stolberg, and Ulrica of Lindau, were probably the only females at court who were not deceived: the one he had scarcely attempted to impose on, satisfied that he had in his hands the means to ensure her silence; the other had calmly watched him and his changes, and, comparing her own observations with those wafted around her from so

many mouths on the same inexhaustible theme, she was internally persuaded that the materials for composing a genuine saint were not in Wolfsteïn. The men, except those who were habitually devout, or those candid characters who had for ever renounced the practice of doubting of any matter, however difficult to swallow, not only questioned the miracle, but shrugged their shoulders, and laughed openly at the facility of those who had more faith. Baron Rosebeck of course was amongst the loudest laughers; and his risibility was the more heartily indulged as he reflected, that Casimir of Vallensteïn having joined a troop of banditti, the Margrave of Lindau being employed in facing the cannon of Gustavus, and Wolfsteïn seeking his amusement among the Brothers Penitents, in short, all the admired youth, who had crossed him in his vanities and eclipsed him with the courtly fair, being dispersed by various motives in various directions, had

left the field of gallantry open to him, with scarcely a competitor.

The Empress found but little difficulty in winning from the lips of the Baroness a confession of the softened state of her feelings towards Wolfsteïn, and even an avowal, that should his attachment remain unaltered, she would not discourage the expression of it, since the ground of her reluctance existed no longer. In fine, it was not denied, that she looked forward as the certain climax of her fate to a union with him.—She was persuaded, that not a single doubt respecting him ought yet to survive, and wondered what strange and indescribable pang it was, and whence born, which would ever and anon shoot through her heart, whenever she allowed herself a glance to the future.

Spring was now far advanced; and the period arrived when the Imperial family and the nobles of the household usually prepared for a removal to the delightful summer residence at Lintz. But the un-

settled, precarious state of the country, overrun, not only by regular troops, but by armed bands of marauders, scattered throughout Germany in formidable numbers, made it a matter of prudence to relinquish for this year so long a journey; although the Duke of Friedland had written to encourage the Emperor to the undertaking, and offered to send a sufficient detachment to serve as an escort, in addition to his Majesty's guards.—This proposal was graciously declined, and it has been rumoured, that Ferdinand had secretly received intimation, that a subtle, and almost infallible combination of schemes was laid for the surprisal of his person; the intelligence being accompanied by the most pathetic and solemn entreaty from his unknown monitor, not for this year to hazard the journey to Lintz. However this may be, it is certain that the usual *trajet* had been in contemplation, but that all preparations were suddenly arrested.

Wolfstein's month of penance was expired, and on his return to Vienna, it was the universal remark, that a peculiar blessing must have hovered over him, since, in despite of severities scarcely inferior to the voluntary and self-inflicted martyrdoms of elder days, in defiance of rigorous fasts, broken only by pulse, black bread, and water, in spite of hair-cloth and hooks, of vigils and weepings, a strict account of which was registered on the records of the convent, and copied as a certificate for his own private use, he was neither lean nor care-worn, his cheek had not wasted with abstinence, nor were his eyes dimmed by such torrents of tears, nor such persevering watchfulness. In short, both his health and his beauty seemed repaired and brightened by his retirement. He was now welcomed by the Baroness with undisguised favour, and as he had washed his character pure from the stains of infidelity and libertinism, he deemed it no longer necessary, as during

his noviciate in virtue, to bear about with him those externals of sanctity, which were inconvenient and cumbrous: since from this time forth he had established, with all sorts and conditions, his reputation as a very exemplary youth, and all that now appeared requisite to his ultimate success was to persevere a little longer in denying himself those sallies in which it had been his nature and his pride to indulge. He had promised and vowed to himself, that his probation should end here, and that he would brook no farther delay in receiving the reward, for which he had submitted to so irksome a task, or, to speak his own language, to which the whims of a woman had compelled him. At his second interview with Louisa after his return from the convent, he urged his suit so successfully, that the prize which had formerly so suddenly slipt from his grasp was now again within his reach. The sister of Wilhelm answered his ardent declaration by yielding her hand to his, saying,

"It is yours, Wolfsteïn."

After having exhausted his store of rapturous eloquence, his spirits suddenly drooped, and a mournful expression took place of the transport, which had a moment before illumined his features.

"What uneasy thought intrudes itself on our happiness, Wolfsteïn—Tell me?"

"Once before," said he, smiting his forehead, "once before, the same ecstacy filled my heart, the cup was at my lip, when a sudden blow struck it from my hand, and the transition from bliss to misery was instantaneous—once again the same vicissitude may happen!"

"Impossible! There is now nothing to fear, because there is nothing to discover."

"*You*, Louisa, may be tranquil, it is your nature—but for me, remembrance hoots in my ear like a night bird,—I cannot silence it! No, my Louisa, till that knot is tied, which no hand may dissever, my hours will be hours of restlessness!

Do you not love your Warbeck well enough to abridge this term of cruel suspense?"

"What a wayward, unreasonable animal is man!" exclaimed the Baroness: "I had flattered myself, that the words I have just uttered would make you happy, and for a short moment they did so; but the cloud is returned already! 'Well, Wolfsteïn, all my future life is yours;—once resolved, I will not cavil for a few hours or days. Obtain a private audience of her Imperial Majesty,—ask her gracious approbation of our union,—and then, be it as you will."

The consent of the Empress was solicited as a mere form, and most freely granted: the Chevalier then imparted to her Majesty the anxious presentiments which tormented him, and which had impelled him to wrest from the Lady of Marchfeldt an acquiescence in their almost immediate union. The Empress laughed.

"You are an artful wretch, Wolfsteïn,"

she said; "your presentiments are a mere manœuvre,—I am sure of it."

It was not necessary to his purpose to combat this accusation. Therefore, after having settled that the nuptials should be celebrated within the week in the cathedral church, in the presence of the Imperial pair, he hastened to disclose the arrangement at the Erdenheïm Palace, and pay his duty to the uncle and aunt of his bride elect; likewise to agree with the former concerning certain legal transactions which were indispensable preliminaries.

When the Empress, with infinite satisfaction, related to Princess Stolberg the union about to take place, she started in humane concern for the untoward destiny of a woman, whom, though she loved not, having considered her from the first hour of her appearance at court in the light of a rival, she could not behold led to the sacrifice without a deep and heartfelt sentiment of compassion. The Empress did not notice the little sympathy her lady of

the key exhibited, in her gladness, since of late she had been accustomed to see her ever grave and thoughtful; but Princess Stolberg was haunted by the most sinister forebodings respecting the fate of the Baroness. The idea pursued her incessantly, that she, who was privy to the late deceptions of Wolfsteïn, would, if she forbore to warn his hapless victim in time to avert her menaced lot, be an accessary in her destruction. Still she dared not stand openly forward and unmask the villain, for, besides her horror of his vengeance, she knew his inexhaustible stores of artifice, and felt assured, that he would easily foil an avowed enemy. Meanwhile time lapsed, and the eve of the eventful day was arrived. Wolfsteïn had omitted no proof of manly tenderness or delicate consideration towards his worshipped bride; his preparations were suitable and magnificent. The Archbishop had requested to perform the ceremony, but Sir Warbeck insisted on holding the claims of the

pious Felix inviolable; nor could he, by any other compliment, have spoken more home to the feelings they were meant to gratify. Immediately after the performance of the ceremony, the happy pair were to proceed to the Chevalier's castle in Austrian Dalmatia, accompanied by the confessor.

The evening before the marriage was spent by the Baroness alone in her oriel, and dedicated to devotion; and Sir Warbeck, who had still some business to transact with her uncle, remained late at the Erdenheïm palace; thereby escaping the well meant persecutions of Father Felix, who had very earnestly invited him to a second dose of Saint Chrysostom. However the eagerness of the good man on this subject was appeased by the Chevalier's remark, that they might consume whole evenings in such studies, when once established at his retreat among the mountains. As Barbara sat waiting in the apartment adjoining the oriel, where her

lady was devoutly supplicating a blessing on the awful change on which she was about to enter, the contemplations of the favourite woman, who was feeding her gaze with the rich robe and costly jewels spread forth in preparation for the morning, were interrupted, as a tap at the door announced an intruder. Barbara rose and opened it, with the intention of denying entrance to whomsoever it might be, but her design was frustrated, for a lady, veiled from head to foot, without allowing her time to speak, passed into the apartment, and having once secured admission, inquired for the Lady of Marchfeldt.

"Really, madam," said Barbara, much chagrined, "I wonder how you can expect my lady to receive visitors this evening, when she is to be married to-morrow morning!—I don't believe there is an atom of consideration left in the world,—not I! My lady is in her oriel, and may be there, for aught I can tell, these two hours to come—and as for me, *I* find it no joke

to have my meditations broken in upon, by one does not know who!"

The Baroness, surprised that her domestic had so little respect for her devotions, rose with the intention of chiding her and enforcing silence, and was much perplexed on beholding her veiled visitor, who advanced to meet her, saying,

"Madam, I have a few words of importance to address to you,—I will not intrude long. Only have the courtesy to command your woman to withdraw."

The former interruption had impressed itself as deeply on Louisa's mind as on that of Wolfsteïn, and she shuddered as she asked herself what might be the motive of this strange and unseasonable visit: she trembled violently, and observed that the stranger partook her agitation.

"Pardon me, madam," said she, in a subdued voice, "if I ask whether you were not once deceived by him with whom you are now on the eve of union?"

"That," replied Louisa, "is a subject

laid for ever at rest in my bosom, and it is no friend who would awaken it."

"Well, madam, I must however hazard one more question—Would you prefer blindly to deliver yourself up the victim of a second deception, or would you thank the voice which brings you timely warning? The being with whose destiny yours will be in a few hours for ever entangled is an artful villain; his late conversion is a miserable farce, and, if you do not listen to me—if you do not consent to pause ere it is too late, you will open your eyes on realities too severe to contemplate calmly, even as the lot of a fellow creature.—I have no motive on earth—Heaven is my witness—but your preservation! Will you, lady, listen calmly to such facts as are in my power to reveal? I will not detain you long."

The Baroness paused—"Doubtless, you do not object that the accused should be confronted with the accuser:—produce your charge to the face of Wolfstein, and I will hear it."

"No,—I cannot! Were I to do so, I should become a defenceless mark for the whole concentrated fury of the most malignant, the most implacable of mankind. —No, you must consent to hear me, and engage never to betray me."

At this moment an inflexion in the voice of the stranger revealed her, in spite of her precautions, to Louisa, who was immediately satisfied that the whole transaction had jealousy for its motive. Her mind became instantly reassured, and she mentally thanked Providence that she had not yielded up her confidence in her intended spouse at the instigation of a disappointed rival.

"Since you do not acquiesce in my proposal, lady," she said, "you must not accuse me of discourtesy if I decline to listen to your narrative. I should cruelly insult the man to whom I have pledged myself, were I to suffer his honour to rest on the breath of a veiled accuser."

"Alas, madam! This is not the first,

time you have reposed your hopes on his faith and honour, even when he was practising on you the basest imposture."

"You avail yourself adroitly, madam, of your knowledge of past events; but be assured, that the only fruit derivable from this visit are a few banished recollections, vainly and most unseasonably conjured up."

"Well!" said the veiled stranger, mournfully," I have risqued much for your preservation—Is it indeed fruitless? Farewell then, and may good angels soften, at least, the calamities which may not be averted!"

The Baroness, more agitated than she wished even to acknowledge to herself, curtsied in silence, and not without curiosity as to the nature of the allegations to which she had refused to listen, beheld her depart. Barbara now entered.

"Upon my word," she exclaimed, "there is no end to interruption! If there is not Conrade, of all people in the world,

—and, who being your ladyship's maître d'hotel, ought to have more discretion, must needs speak a little word to his lady at this hour! And for your ladyship to look at him at such a time of night is sure to give you bad dreams; for what ails the fellow I know not, but he stares, and looks so wild and pale—I declare he is fitter for any thing than a bridal procession."

"Where is Conrade?"

"Pacing the gallery, my lady."

The Baroness had observed that this faithful domestic had as much as possible avoided her presence since her engagement to Wolfsteïn was become public, and could but too well divine the matter of his discontent. It was therefore with great reluctance she prepared for the interview.

"Well, Conrade," said she, "what is your business?"

"My lady," he replied, weeping bitterly, "I am arrived at an hour such as I

hoped never to have seen!—I have dreamed these three nights of my dear master, rest his precious soul!—I have seen him many a time look sad enough when he was alive, but never as he looked yesternight:—he pointed to some object behind me, and shook his head;—I turned to see what it was, and there stood the hag of the wood of Mornau, who screamed with a loud and horrible laugh, "The wolf *ha* secured the lamb!" I waked in cold perspiration; the echo of the words, and the laugh, were still ringing in my ears."

"Conrade, you presume too much on the favour in which I have ever held you since you accompanied my dear brother from the army.—Your conduct is harassing and disrespectful; nevertheless, for the sake of the past, I overlook it thus far."

"For the sake of the past, lady—for the sake of the past, I must bid you farewell! —I cannot serve him whom my master hated.—Oh! how I have seen that poor

wan cheek flush at his very name!—and this was the very thing he dreaded!—Alas! my lady, I am come to tell you that Conrade will pray for you so long as he has breath.—I was born in your castle, and I love the very stones of it, and every bit of moss that cleaves to the old walls, but I shall see it no more."

"Conrade," said the Baroness, in great agitation, "you would not leave me! Whither would you go?"

"To seek after him whom I love, because my master loved him, the unhappy, circumvented Count Vallenstein."

"Conrade, I will not part with you! You, the foster brother of my Wilhelm! No, I cannot part with you! You shall not desert me, Conrade!"

His honest feeling could not resist the pleading of his lady, of Baron Wilhelm's sister; and finding himself somewhat relieved by the vent he had given his full heart, and grateful for the attachment his mistress evinced towards him, he con-

sented to remain in her service; stipulating only, not to enter the cathedral during the ceremony of the following morning.

Two such interviews were not calculated to tranquillise the mind of the Baroness, and it was with difficulty she put to silence the sinister thoughts they awakened. No other warning, no other intervention occurred; and the hour arrived, and passed, which was to decide her fate irrevocably.

CHAPTER V.

"Come, let me wring your heart! for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff!"

The ceremony which united Louisa, baroness of Marchfeldt, to the Chevalier Warbeck of Wolfsteïn, was performed with all imaginable solemnity: a royal hand gave away the bride, and the Archbishop of Vienna, although he did not tie the knot, mingled his benedictions with those of Father Felix. Madame de Wolfsteïn imagined, that immediately on quitting the cathedral they should repair to the palace, to partake a farewell collation provided by the Empress; but it now appeared that Wolfsteïn had arranged otherwise, and had excused himself to the Imperial pair, on the plea of gaining such a station, on the conclusion of their first

day's journey, as would offer meet accommodation; and to effect which would render it necessary for them to push forward with all speed. These excuses had been reluctantly accepted, and the Empress, with tears and blessings, embraced, and bade a long adieu to the bride. Madame de Wolfsteïn's consciousness of the effect Princess Stolberg's warning and Conrade's grief had produced on her mind caused her to struggle powerfully, and successfully, against the slightest exhibition of agitation, well knowing she had a jealous, tenacious spirit to study; and such was her self-command, that neither sigh nor tear escaped her, till the tenderness of her Imperial friend for a moment shook her firmness. The bridegroom forbore to betray his impatience of their prolonged and reiterated adieus, and when they were over, with all due courtesy, handed the Empress, and such of the noble ladies as had graced his nuptials, to their several

equipages. Then he returned for his bride, and, with a slight bow to the Archbishop, who remained in conversation with her, said abruptly, drawing her arm somewhat ungently within his—

"Come! shall there be no end to this execrable nonsense?"

A costly veil shaded her eyes, and flowed over her figure, so that whatever consternation her countenance might have revealed at this rude summons was hidden, as, rather dragged than led, she arrived at her carriage: while she entered it, the Chevalier supported her on one side, and one of his principal domestics on the other. Too much absorbed by her own awful situation, she did not ob-observe the man, till she heard a hoarse voice croak out, "All happiness to the fair bride of Wolfsteïn!"

The accent was very familiar to her ear, and she started with a half-suppressed shriek, as, looking round, she beheld, in the livery of her husband, the too well-

remembered features of the hag of the Wood of Mornau.

"Heyday! what is the matter now?" cried the surly bridegroom.

"Surely, surely, I have seen that man before; I cannot be mistaken."

"Oh, is that all? Here, honest Scharaffa; thy lady rejoices in the sight of an old acquaintance;—she offers thee her fair hand to kiss."

As he spoke, he snatched the reluctant hand, and compelled it to undergo the salute of that hideous mouth: the carriage now proceeded. To the grief and wrath of his insulted wife, Wolfstein was alike insensible; and, in an ironical tone, he complimented her on the tact in distinguishing that man with her favour.

"Scharaffa," said he, "has not his fellow on earth. His body is perfection, and his soul is the counterpart!—*You* have witnessed some specimens of his dexterity. Oh, I would rather cut off my right arm than part with him."

Meanwhile, the unhappy Madame de Wolfstein sate wondering if the events of this morning were real, or only the wanderings of a fearful dream! She was too much stunned and bewildered to think clearly; and it was well nigh an hour since they had passed the gates of Vienna, and the silence on her part continued unbroken, and was likewise uninterrupted by her companion, save that he whistled or hummed, occasionally, parts of different songs. At length he cried out, suddenly,

"Bless my soul! this is our first day of honey-moon—we should be merry. If we look so sullen to-day, what shall we do next year? Come, kiss me, my pretty bride!" And he rudely snatched the boon, without waiting to have it yielded.

"What! you are not in the cue for talking!—Then you shall be indulged, for you will make the better listener, and I have a few little matters to relate

to you. I wonder," said he, with a diabolical laugh, "what my old friend the Spectre Knight would say, if he could guess what we have been about this morning,—if he had seen his incomparable sister give her hand to the man he detested, and his saint of a Confessor ratifying and blessing the deed. He must sleep sound, if such intelligence provoke him not to burst his marble box.—I trust he will not have the barbarity to haunt you, Louisa."

"Oh, Wolfsteïn," said she at length, goaded from her silence, "art thou human, thus to treat a woman who has confided herself to thy manhood?"

"Confided, say you, my dear! You forget then what a dance you have led me; you forget that you hunted me like a dog out of the Castle of Marchfeldt; you forget the hair-shirt, and the anthems, and the brothers penitents, and the whole farrago of grimaces and hypocrisies you have compelled me to practise! Have

I not been obliged to *cheat* you, step by step, into this? And talk you of confidence! No, no, madam; *you* may forget, but I shall remember."

A pause succeeded, and was not again broken till they arrived at a post-house; and Conrade, who had hitherto remained with the hindmost of the train, now rode to the side of the carriage, and endeavoured to articulate some dutiful compliments to his lady, but he looked deadly pale, and so agitated, that Madame de Wolfstein perceived at a glance, that the same inauspicious omen which had opened her eyes to all the horrors of her fate had been observed by her faithful servant. The moment Conrade saw and recognised Scharaffa, he devoutly thanked Heaven, which had withheld him from abandoning his mistress.

"Ah, Conrade, my good fellow," cried the Chevalier, "I must shake hands with thee, as an earnest of the pleasure with

which I number so honest a youth amongst my domestics."

Conrade hesitated, but a lock from his unhappy lady determined him; and, alarmed for the consequences his too visible agitation might produce, she employed him to provide her with a glas of water. When the cavalcade once more set forward, Wolfsteïn said,

"You see, my love, you are fortunate in escaping the endurance of the tedious, vulgar routine of wedded life!—You have chosen a man in nothing like other men;—my motives and my measures are all original—there are millions of men and only one Wolfsteïn. Love, or avarice, or ambition, are the first motives of most marriages; my first stimulus to the pursuit of you was hatred. Your brother's insane aversion for me, and my own antipathy to young Vallensteïn, were my provocations, long before your attractions furnished additional ones. Your

brother's mind was irritable and fanciful; and I wrought on it till all the dark chimeras of superstition were associated with my image;—I fretted him nearly into madness, and my trusty Scharaffa completed the achievement. Now mark, and applaud my skill in woman's nature. My whole scheme rested on the speculation, that you, in spite of rumour, were no phœnix, and that the perverseness of your sex was in you. I knew that the weak and feverish Wilhelm would amuse you incessantly, with the *diableries* his fancy had conjured up respecting me;—I knew he would warn you of Wolfsteïn, and that Wolfsteïn's name ringing continually on your ear, would at length find its echo on your mind. You had heard of humanity and valour before, and had read of them in romances, but, for such a one as Wilhelm described me, you knew no parallel. He had the weakness too to tell you, that he feared our destinies were some way entangled: thus

superstition aided the native contradiction of your sex. In short, my ground was sure,—was it not, love?"

"Remember, however, Sir Warbeck," said Louisa, indignantly, "that it was in the character of Vallensteïn you were received at Marchfeldt, and that the moment your imposture was discovered you were driven thence."

"Trust my recollection, Madame de Wolfsteïn;—you shall have many a token that I have not forgotten it."

"You are so communicative, sir," said the bride, rendered desperate by the insults which her brutal spouse had, in so short a time, heaped upon her, "that I fear not to hazard a repulse, if I inquire whether the tale related by your valet to my woman was genuine, or the produce of your ingenuity?"

"As masterly and effective a manœuvre, madam, as any in the whole train. I could almost have renounced my nature, and pitied the man I hated,

for the reception he was doomed to meet after his valorous rescue of you from the hands of my trusty *Zingari*, but that his officious interference drove me to the invention of a new set of stratagems, just at the moment when I might have secured you for ever. Vallenstein, in his way, stands like myself, single in the creation: he is my antipodes. He is romantic, honourable, zealous, affectionate, according to the most exaggerated acceptation of all those terms, but the odds were against him! Your brother, your *angel Wilhelm*, besought you, with his dying voice, to receive Vallensteïn for your husband; and all the glorious contradiction of woman was enlisted on my side."

We may better imagine than enumerate the thousand pungent self-upbraidings, which conspired on all sides to goad and lacerate the heart of this unfortunate bride. Her brother's solemn warning disregarded, her own experience

set at nought, a long list of evidences, extending even to the last moment that her fate was in her own power, despised and rejected; nor was the consciousness of her infatuated ingratitude to a being, such as, even his direst enemy had described Vallensteïn, the least bitter of those remorseful feelings to which she now delivered herself up.

"Now do not be too angry with yourself, my dear; for destiny seems to have as capricious and froward a choice of favourites as any young lady in the land. There is poor Vallenstein, driven out, a forlorn and desperate wanderer, disowned by his father, in disgrace with his sovereign, calumniated by the world, because it is his whim to be virtuous: he has not sufficient filial piety to become a traitor, although his parent is one, and wanted ingenuity for the invention of a few lies, so he left court without an excuse. He was born with every auspicious promise that ever whispered round a babe's cradle,

but his virtue has thwarted his natal star. I was the last of a decayed and ruined house; desolate and joyless was the hour of my birth; but my genius has triumphed, my sovereign trusts me, the beguiled world smiles on me, my wealth is considerable, my power tremendous,—and the Baroness of Marchfeldt, Wilhelm's sister, is my wife."

Still she preserved her melancholy silence, and the Chevalier longed to provoke her to some retort and upbraiding; for, as she drew her veil close over her face, and neither spoke nor wept, he could not with all his penetration discover the exact extent to which his poison worked, and was thereby defrauded of part of his diabolical enjoyment.—At length,

"Louisa, love," said he, "do you never weep? Brides always shed a few tears as a matter of custom.—Don't stand on ceremony with me, I pray!"

"No, Sir Warbeck,—my sorrows are

too deeply lodged for tears or sighs to relieve them. Whatever I suffer shall be endured without complaint; I have been a wilful, an infatuated self-destroyer. I have no right to such relief as tears bestow."

"Well, you are a stout-hearted girl, and I honour your resolution!—I could have had torrents of tears by this time, had I married any other woman in Germany.—So, we are to have no scenes! Since that is your determination, lady, it is well I have provided my castle of Lornberg with guests, or we should be consumed with ennui. I wish you would talk," said he, yawning; "I am weary of the sound of my own voice, melodious as it is. *Do talk!* I command you to talk, madam!—And what! Do you suppose your face is your own, that you wrap it up from the view of its master in that frippery!" And snatching the magnificent point mantle which enveloped her, and which was the gift of the Empress,

he rolled it into a bundle and threw it into the road.

"Upon my soul," said he, "I believe I have wedded an automaton!"

"If you mean to compel me to tears or exclamations, Chevalier, I repeat that your efforts are vain. Every insult you have offered me I deserve; your conduct is but the just retribution of mine. You are become, by my own voluntary election, my earthly master; I will not resist your right over me, nor weakly struggle to retract my irrevocable gift;—it is only in proportion as I meekly endure your outrages, that I can hope to be reconciled with Heaven or with myself."

"So you defy me, madam!"

"No, Sir Warbeck; on the contrary, your will shall in all things direct my obedience; I will never thwart or oppose you. Say what you will, do what you will, you shall find no contradiction from me."

"Well, you are a gem of a wife. I

should be a churl to deny it;—and yet it seems strange, that on this our wedding day we should have spent,"—and he looked deliberately at his watch,—"four whole hours, and you have been so hard-hearted as never to address a single caressing word to your own poor Wolfsteïn.—You don't love me, Louisa. Where is your heart, madam? It is mine! Have you dared dispose of it elsewhere, or do you sulkily keep it at home? Where is it?"

"It is so crushed and broken, Chevalier, it is scarcely worth your inquiry."

"Such as it is, however, it is mine,—is it not? Speak!"

"In evil hour, Chevalier," said she, evading his question, "you beguiled me of it."

"Oh, then, you mean to say *it is* mine; that all its fancy, all its affection resides with me—Is that what you would say?"

"What I would have said."

"Oh, then, you are trifling with me, it

seems, quibbling, and manœuvring, and dealing in your verbal subtleties; but you have met with your equal there—I will not be beaten from my point. Do you love me? Would you, were the knot unknit that binds you to me, again select Wolfsteïn from the world? I forbid your evasions, madam—speak to the point."

"Chevalier, you cannot question the nature of my sentiments for you at this moment—I appeal to yourself! When I gave my hand to you this morning, I did love you with my whole heart; I did choose you from the whole world. Judge yourself what change four hours have been capable of working."

She uttered these words in a subdued voice, for she did not desire to irritate.

"Do you love me, madam?" exclaimed he, seizing her wrist, and grasping it with such force as to make the impression of his fingers, "I ask, do you love me? Speak to the point."

"If," said she, trembling, "it will

content you that I should utter the *words*, I love you, I will do it, for I have promised implicit obedience."

"Oh ho, madam! Do you know what you are? Do you know that a wife who does not love her husband is guilty of treason, perjury, and adultery? A pretty bargain I have made!—Who *do* you love then? Some of the court butterflies, no doubt—you like bergamotte and essence of mille fleurs. However, as I have got scent of you, you shall be watched, madam!"

A more wretched and hopeless situation than that of Madame de Wolfsteïn cannot be conceived; doubly wretched from having been the work of her own will, and performed in the face of every sinister omen; in short, as she could but confess to herself, a sorrowful proof how strongly the principle of contradiction must have ruled within her. Desolate and cheerless indeed was the path before her: to Heaven, and to Heaven only, could she look

for support, during the remainder of life's painful road, and there only could she hope for rest from her miseries.

That day's journey had been one of much corporeal fatigue to all the travellers, except Louisa; the intense suffering of whose mind occasioned the weariness of its companion to be entirely overlooked. Yet no one shared in the general satisfaction when they rested at the auberge, where for a few hours they were to take up their quarters, more truly than herself;—it was a change, and any change might produce some amendment in actual circumstances, and she believed could not make them worse.

The Chevalier affected prodigious anxiety about the horses, addressing to them a profusion of such fondling and endearing epithets, as from the lips of a bridegroom might more appropriately have been otherwise applied; casting on his ill-starred wife, at the same time, significant glances, which might be easily

interpreted into, "You see I have *something* to caress."

To her infinite relief, he accompanied his grooms into the stable, and she had a few moments' respite from his now odious and fearful society. Meanwhile, Barbara, like something frantic, rushed after her into the house, invoking the protection of the Holy Virgin, and half a dozen of the saints. She seized her lady in her arms, and, with many sobs, informed her of the horrible discovery she had made, that the grim and appalling being who had so terrified them at the lonely post-house had rode in their suite, and was the favourite domestic of the Chevalier.

"Oh my lady! what will become of us! To think of being shut up in a wild solitary castle in the midst of mountains with that man. I shall see his ugly face looking through my curtains as it did through the lattice. I know to a certainty I shall die of fright, and what a

shocking death that will be!" Louisa, spiritless herself, endeavoured to sooth and reassure her terrified maiden, lest Wolfstein should return and find her in this state of agitation, produced by the sight of his favourite Scharaffa. As she feared, it happened, for in came Wolfstein while poor Barbara was loudly pouring forth her wild lamentations.

"What are those women about?" cried he, fiercely. "Silence that girl, madam, or I will. It was the extreme of weakness in me to permit your encumbering me with such a useless fool. You will have sufficient attendance at Lornberg."

The words of her master had a most sedative effect on Barbara; her sobs, and her voice, which had been exalted to a sharp treble, sunk instantaneously. She looked earnestly first at her lady, then at the bridegroom, and every selfish apprehension and anxiety were confounded in the sentiments of horror, compassion, and indignation with which she contem-

plated the miserable destiny of the former. Conrade, fearful lest some revolting scene might be produced by the indiscretion of his fellow servant, had followed her, and now on some pretence called her forth. Father Felix, whose vehicle had been by some trifling obstacle delayed, entered at the same moment, and began his inquiries after his beloved charge,—as how she had supported the fatigues of such a toilsome day's journey, &c., remarking on the beauty of the weather and sublimity of the scenery. The bridal pair, with the exception of a few brief answers from Madame de Wolfstein, were silent; a circumstance which did not alarm the acuteness of the friar. Supper was laid, lights were brought, and Conrade and Scharaffa attended the party at table.

"For my part," said the Chevalier sullenly, "I hate all this parade and nonsense. I may permit it for once, because it is my wedding-day—but mark: I will

have no more formal meals. My household must eat as I do, or not eat at all." Felix looked astonished and bewildered, and Louisa, who perceived that her lord and master was not disposed to take a seat at the table, said,

"Do you disapprove my sitting to the meal, sir? I will act as you command."

"Take your own way, madam, and leave me to mine; when you have seen it you will know how *I* choose to eat."

These words were a thunder-stroke to Felix, who had entered the auberge without a shade of suspicion how the case stood.

"Come, my dear," said he tenderly, "you look wan and drooping, and must needs require some refection;—even judging by myself, I am sure it may not without injury be dispensed with."

Louisa seated herself silently, and endeavoured to evade the mournful glance of inquiry, which her kind-hearted confessor cast towards her: the good man,

however, was far from suspecting the extent of the evil. Some unlucky misunderstanding had, he deemed, occurred between the new-married pair, some trivial grievance which would heal presently.—Louisa swallowed a few morsels, and Wolfstein ate his supper as he strode about the room, helping himself, indifferently and unceremoniously, to whatever suited his fancy: the only person he vouchsafed to treat with any civility was Conrade, who endeavoured, for the sake of his lady, to conceal the contempt and abhorrence in which he held him; while poor Louisa built some faint and vague hopes on the favour her husband evinced for this valuable domestic.

"Scharaffa," said he, "I insist on your being kind and courteous to your new comrade: you know the sentiments I entertain for him, and I will have him used as he deserves."

"Doubt me not, master," said the hideous being, in a voice so discordant

that Felix turned, and looked steadily on the speaker.

"What do you see in that fellow, father?" said Wolfstein, abruptly stopping in his walk. "You fasten your eyes on him as if you were about to exercise from him an evil spirit."

"It struck me, my son, that I had seen his face before, but where I cannot call to mind."

"And so you did, sir," said the audacious Scharaffa: "I met your reverence at Albert's cottage on the banks of the Raab, and by the same token your reverence may recollect the miniature so miraculously deposited in your sleeve; the hand of your humble servant had the honour to place it there."

Poor Felix became perplexed and confused: what to think, or whereto all this tended, he kn ew not; he could only fear that it did not tend to good: he ventured to inquire of Conrade if a book which he

meant to make his midnight study, had been deposited in his apartment.

"Do Saint Chrysostom and the other Fathers, who took so obliging a share in my conversion, travel with us?"

"They do, my son."

"I am glad of it: Lornberg in the winter is a cold station, and they will help to make the pine fires blaze gloriously."

CHAPTER VI.

"For my revenges were high bent upon him,
And watch'd the time to shoot."

Shakspeare.

During the second day's journey, matters proceeded much as they had done throughout the first; certainly they were in no degree ameliorated: the brutality and fierceness of Wolfsteïn rather increased than diminished, and was moreover varied by occasional fits of fondling, not a whit less irksome or insulting; and these transitions were so sudden as to resemble the caprice of insanity, insomuch that Madame de Wolfsteïn began half to suspect that the cruel treatment she endured had its source in mental derangement. Nothing could exceed the wild and almost terrific sublimity of the road they travelled; and in happier days,

Louisa's enthusiasm for the grander features of nature would have been indulged to the utmost by such a journey; but now she beheld the landscape with a passive, frozen gaze, neither delighted by the beautiful, nor affected by the awful. Now they wound through rich and verdant valleys, the nests of many a little peaceful hamlet, whose inhabitants were cutting or training the vines which extended far along the sunny slopes of the hills that sheltered their cottages; now they made their way through wide and leafy solitudes, whose glades stretched for miles, beneath the embowering branches of the pine, the oak, or the beech. Sometimes they would find themselves hanging, as it were, on the ridge of some stupendous precipice, from whose side tumbled the frequent and deafening torrent, hastening to augment with its tributary waters the river which rolled far beneath within its rocky channel. As she crossed the alpine bridge which rocked and creaked

under the carriage, Louisa would cast a vague, desponding glance on the scarce fathomable abyss over which they were suspended: she did not, as she once would have done, lift the crucifix to her lips and breathe a prayer that Heaven would protect her through the dangerous pass; on the contrary, an indefinite notion that it might prove the goal of her hopeless pilgrimage would cross her bewildered thoughts.

As the evening drew on, they arrived at a lonely post-house, from whence some slight and rude refreshment was brought to the superior travellers, while the domestics made the necessary changes of cattle, and other arrangements for proceeding. The moon was beautiful, and nearly at the full; nevertheless each horseman now provided himself with a pine torch dipt in pitch. Louisa mechanically inquired the motive of this illumination, and was answered with somewhat more than usual civility—

"To protect us from the wolves, which probably will beset us on a plain about half a league from hence: they attack in bodies, and it behoves travellers to be on the alert against them."

She now perceived that this was not the sole precaution adopted against the approaching danger, for several wolf-hounds, which had been led in the rear of the retinue, were now brought forward, and set at liberty, their hoarse baying resembling nearly that of the animal they were designed to combat.

"Are you frightened, Louisa?"

"Not much, Sir Warbeck," she replied with a faint smile.

"Not much!" echoed he contemptuously; "I begin to perceive I have married an alabaster doll:—if you are not afraid of wolves, you are no woman! Perhaps you are so inaccessible to all human infirmities, that you may deem my advice to put on your pelisse superfluous;—though it has been hitherto warm, you

will find it cold enough presently, and such transitions are dangerous."

This recommendation, though not very graciously made, was rather an improvement, and Louisa lost no time in wrapping herself in her Polish cloak.

"Now, go to sleep if you can," was the next counsel, "for we shall hardly halt again before the dawn."

At the same time stretching out his limbs, closing his eyes, and drawing his cap over his face, he disposed himself to set her the example: she was, however, employed too busily in the wretched exercise of thought, to cherish a hope of such blessed forgetfulness. They crossed the skirts of the perilous plain, where the retinue halted, and formed themselves into a closer body, the carriages in the centre, the dogs ranging wide, but obeying the voice or the whistle, and the horsemen loading the pistols, which they placed ready primed in their belts, and waving their blazing torches. At length

the bay of the dogs grew louder and more menacing, and the horses snorted and reared, as if they were aware of the vicinity of some dreaded enemy. Louisa believed, occasionally, that she could distinguish, from a distance, a long deep howl, between the baying of the dogs, as it were in answer; and momentarily as the sound increased upon her ear, and she was assured of its reality, she expected the approach of some of those ferocious creatures from whose throats it proceeded. By the shouts of the escort, and the intermingled voices of various animals, she knew that some wolves had appeared in sight, while the discharge of fire-arms, followed by shrill yellings, informed her that some of the enemy had perished in the attack. They had arrived near the centre of the plain, which was a league across, and skirted by deep thickets of underwood, her lord and master continuing all the time in a slumber so sound, as to have bidden defiance to

the noise and confusion which reigned amongst his equipage. Now, however, he started up, and, looking out, exclaimed loudly,

"What are you all about? Have you forgotten?"

"No," said Scharaffa; "we have just reached the spot: he awaits your pleasure."

"Oh, Conrade, my good fellow, are you there?" cried the Chevalier.

Conrade rode to the side of the carriage.

"Do you happen to bear in remembrance, my good friend, the courtesy you showed, in seeing the last of me when I quitted the castle of Marchfeldt? Do you recollect the brief dialogue which passed between us, as I crossed the drawbridge under your auspices? You *do*, I perceive. It is my custom, honest Conrade, never to remain in any man's debt, and I have waited impatiently to

acquit myself towards *you*;—the moment of acquittance is at hand."

Conrade now found that he was completely surrounded by his companions, and his bridle seized on each side. He essayed to snatch a pistol from his belt for the purpose of self-defence, when he received a blow on the head from behind, which stunned him for the moment, and rendered it easy to drag him from his horse. Once dismounted, he was presently disarmed, all appeal or resistance being useless, and no less unavailing than the cries and supplications of the unhappy Madame de Wolfsteïn, whose hitherto passive endurance was now effectually conquered. She threw herself at the feet of her barbarous husband, and when she found him deaf to her pleadings, uttered the most piercing shrieks, while the voice of the poor victim was heard entreating his beloved lady to be comforted, and leave him to his fate, to which the sight

of her distress made him yield without any farther struggle. Meanwhile the cavalcade passed on, and Louisa knew not what was become of him: she believed that Scharaffa had murdered him, and wringing her hands, her lips opened from time to time to give breath to the horror and anguish of her heart: once that she murmured to herself, "Inhuman, blood-stained assassins!"

"What do you mean, madam? are you mad? You do not take *me*, nor any of my people, for murderers, I hope! Desist from your base and wicked calumnies! If the wolves eat your insolent minion, is it an act of mine? He is free to outrun them if he can, and there is at least one chance in ten thousand that he escapes them. Be silent, madam, and learn to command yourself with more decency! —*You*, who talk of submission and obedience! You are a vixen, a Xantippe!"

"But is he not murdered? Tell me, dear Wolfstein!"

"*Dear* Louisa, that is more than my conscience will justify my asserting, for the wolves have, in all human likelihood, supped on him by this time: he *was* alive when we took leave of him."

Even this was a consolatory assurance, for Madame de Wolfstein did not fully comprehend how fearful were the odds against him. Poor father Felix, who was in part witness to this wicked and remorseless outrage, exhausted his little strength in endeavours to quit his carriage, in which, meanwhile, he was closely confined, and in uplifting his voice, now in vain supplications, now in denunciations and maledictions; but he, like his unhappy charge, was forced to limit himself to protesting against what he could not by any effort prevent. His contemplations were of a most disquieting nature; he had been the instrument of uniting his beloved daughter to a violent, ruthless man, and, as he feared, a hopeless reprobate. For the remainder of his

own little journey, he took small care whether it was rough or smooth, since, at all events, its termination could not be distant ; but he feared lest the faith and constancy of his tender child should be unequal to the terrible, and probably, tedious, conflict she was doomed to sustain.

For Conrade, the foster-brother of Wilhelm, who had grown up from infancy under his eye, he had cherished a parental regard ; and the heart which could not endure to see the hair-cloth press too roughly on the breast of a supposed penitent must have suffered grievously in beholding an object, so justly beloved, cast forth as food to the famished savages of the wilderness.

They had only another halt for the night ere they would arrive at Lornberg Castle : this halt took place the night following the one on which Conrade had been abandoned to the wolves, and was the first time that Father Felix and Wolf-

stein encountered each other after this dreadful transaction. The friar had debated within himself whether, for the sake of the unhappy Louisa, he ought to keep silence, or whether an imperative duty did not command him to speak his thoughts in the face of that bad man: the Chevalier well understood what was passing in his heart.

"Well, father! how fares it? What is this? Do you refuse to shake hands with *me*, your friend and patron?—I could get thee an abbey to-morrow, man, if thou hadst sense enough to appreciate the obligation."

"My hand shall never come in contact with thine, till a true and exemplary penance shall cleanse it from the blood which cleaves to it."

"Oh, you are thereabouts, are you? But how could I help it? I had made a vow, from which I had never been absolved, and therefore I religiously kept it.—Now, I'll tell thee what, Friar; owing

to a little infirmity in my nature, I am *apt* to breathe such vows, and to hold them sacred:—it is for the health of my friends that they should bear in mind this my propensity."

"I care not for thy threats, assassin! I would rather be what Conrade is than what thou art!"

"Each to his fancy;—but as you are in the mood for conversation, and I for repose, suppose you go and hold counsel with the pious Chrysostom, or some of his long-winded fraternity.—Scharaffa, conduct the Friar to his dormitory."

The wretch made one of his hideous grimaces, significant of mischief, and replied,

"Alas! my master! a grievous disaster befell us on our journey this day, such as I know not how to relate.—You remember the little bridge over the torrent that we crossed at noon,—well, just as we were in the middle of it, as ill luck would have it, what should happen, but the cart

and all the fathers tumbled over; and there they are, sure enough, travelling down the bed of as rapid a stream as any in the Austrian dominions—stop them who can!"

"And was the poor mule precipitated into the stream?" asked Felix.

"No; when we found the fathers were going, we cut the traces, and saved the beast."

"Upon my word," said Wolfsteïn, with mock concern, "a most afflicting catastrophe! And Father Chrysostom too!—As for the rest, I could console myself."

Felix had no doubt that the privation of his books was an act of deliberate malice,—but self-denial had been the habitual exercise of his innocent life, though hitherto its acts had been voluntary.—We estimate our grievances by comparison; a few days earlier, the Confessor would have rated the loss of his books amongst the heaviest which could have befallen him.

"Well," said he, meekly, "this night

at least I shall not miss them, since I have a work of prayer and meditation to perform, which will fill all its hours."

Louisa, who had sat in silent despondency, now arose, and kneeling before him, said,

"Pray for me too, my father!"

He laid his hand on her head, blessed her, and, with an aching heart, retired for the night.

The castle of Lornberg was situated in the province of Austrian Dalmatia; it stood commandingly in the gorge of a lofty mountain, near whose base rolled the waves of the Adriatic. It had once belonged to the Ottoman, and was in the days of its pride a place of great strength, its several towers extending irregularly along the brow of the ravine from which they seemed to grow like a natural crown. Its architecture was like its site, irregular and various, having been the work of many periods, and many a huge mass detached from the main structure, either

by the hand of former violence, or the slow and mining operation of time, now hung suspended over the side of the ravine, threatening to overwhelm the passenger in its downfal, or lay already prostrate at the bottom of the deep glen, which in the summer formed a pass for the shepherd, or hardy mountaineer, and in winter was the bed of a torrent, which made its progress through this rocky channel to fulfil its ultimate destination in augmenting the waters of the Adriatic. There was a dreary, desolate, ruinous magnificence in the aspect of Lornberg castle: the light heart would have sunk on entering the huge dark jaws of its heavy portal, while the stern and melancholy mind would hail the congenial abode; but the master of this frowning pile was a strange mixture of the savage misanthrope and the selfish voluptuary. Its interior was well calculated to flatter the taste of an effeminate, unprincipled being, addicted to every luxurious refinement; it had its theatre, its

music hall, its baths;—its halls and gal-leries were adorned by the most exquisite sculptures, and the wide staircases pre-sented groups of fresco painting which stood forward in such brilliant animation as might deceive the unpractised eye into a belief in their breathing existence. All the costly productions of Greece and Italy were exhibited throughout the apartments in lavish profusion, and the state chambers were so admirably arranged for the pur-pose of indulgence and dissipation, one might have thought that the Sybarite, who complained that the fold of the rose-leaf rendered his sleep uneasy, presided over their construction and decoration.

It was night when the bridal array approached the castle of Lornberg;—about the distance of a quarter of a league several of the train had begun at intervals to wind their horns in chorus, and it was not long ere a lengthened echo answered them. As they advanced, the echo grew louder, and Wolfstein acquainted Louisa

that it proceeded from some of his people skilled in the use of the cornet, who welcomed him from the battlements. All the gloomy solemn forms of feudal state were observed in the admission of Wolfsteïn and his bride within the walls of their castle. As they passed between a numerous file of armed men in strange uniform, and fiercely whiskered, who were drawn up to receive them;

"Is all well, Pandulfo?" said the Chevalier.

"Most prosperous, my lord!"

"Good! Then salute your lady, and bid her welcome home."

Captain Pandulfo bent one knee to the ground, and kissed the passive hand of Louisa: a burst of music proceeding from a concert of various instruments, all exquisitely played, now rose upon their ears; and the ponderous gate of the castle being thrown open, they entered the great hall in a blaze of light. Louisa was surprised to find herself surrounded by a group of

beautiful girls, all in the costume of different countries: their habits, though very dissimilar, had each its appropriate elegance, and the countenance of each of these girls formed a specimen of the characteristic style of beauty of her native land. The music ceased, and one of the damsels stood forth from the group, and ecited, in the most mellifluous strains of Italian verse, an elegant epithalamium. She was a Venetian, and singularly skilled in the gift of improvisation.

"We thank thee, sweet siren! We thank thee, pretty Zanina!" said Wolfstein, in a fondling tone. She then fell back into the group, and as the music recommenced, in a soft Sicilian air, joined her companions in a ballet, which ended in two of the youngest approaching Wolfstein and his bride, and laying at the feet of each a crown of intermingled myrtles and roses. Louisa was confounded and bewildered, and knew not what to make of the scene she beheld;—she de-

clared herself exhausted and fatigued, and her pale harassed countenance bore witness that the complaint was not frivolous.—

"Well, lady," said the bridegroom, "your damsels shall conduct you to the suite of apartments which are prepared for you, and refreshments shall follow you. You must summon the blush rose to your cheek again!—I harbour nothing that is not beautiful within the walls of my castle, except Scharaffa, and his perfection stands in lieu of beauty."

Then, saluting her forehead, he consigned her to the care of her lovely attendants, who, each bearing a waxen taper highly perfumed, preceded her up the staircase. Having conducted her to her magnificent chamber, and led her through the suite which was allotted to her especial use, they proceeded to press upon her, with officious courtesy, a thousand attentions and services, which all their graces, and all their blandishments, did not prevent from adding to the already overwhelming

fatigue of the care-worn traveller—they were too adroit in the business of pleasing, not to perceive their want of success.

"Ah!" cried Zanina, who appeared to take the lead, "our charming lady needs repose—Speak then, lady! Utter your commands, and with a thought they shall be obeyed. Select from amongst us whichever has the happiness to please you, as your principal woman, and the rest shall withdraw."

Louisa mildly thanked them, but owned that the maiden she had brought from Vienna was necessary to her comfort, and that her chief wish at that moment was to see Barbara. They received this communication with perfect nonchalance, and wishing sweet repose to their lady, retired: in a few minutes her faithful Barbara was her attendant.

Poor Barbara and Conrade Munster had been brought up under the same roof, the happy contented subjects of the same

kind rule from their earliest remembrance: the playful petulance of a volatile brother and sister was habitual between them, but they were truly attached to each other: it is no wonder then that Conrade's untimely and miserable fate should have produced a deep and mournful effect on this light-hearted girl.—Till this moment she had no one with whom she could vent her feelings with any hope of sympathy, and to find herself restored to unrestrained intercourse with her beloved lady was such an indulgence, as she hardly hoped again to experience. Her first expressions partook of the joy which this unexpected privilege inspired, but she did not allow much time to elapse ere she burst into a torrent of tears for the fate of Conrade, accompanied by the most bitter invectives on her wicked, inhuman master.

"Alas, alas, Barbara! that I cannot disprove the justice of thy words, yet that I must forbid thee to utter them! Remem-

ber it is of my husband, of thy master, thou art speaking;—we must see and suffer in silence."

"That is quite impossible," said Barbara, "for I should infallibly burst. Pray, my lady, what do you think of all these dancing, skipping, impudent girls, with their songs, and their smiles, and their attitudes?"

"In good truth, Barbara, I know not well what to think of them."

"They are not fit to come into such thoughts as yours at all, my lady, I believe, and nobody but such a—as my lord, would think of bringing his innocent bride into such a nest of harpies."

"And are all those lovely, graceful, accomplished beings, such as you would insinuate?"

"So Scharaffa says:—he is an odious, hideous, abominable wretch; but for all that, he says I am better worth looking at than any of those dancing, singing, fantastical puppets:—*why* he should think

so," and she cast an involuntary glance towards a large Venetian mirror, "I can't guess, for he never heard a civil word come out of my lips."

"And did he tell thee that all those pretty creatures are the slaves of vice?"

"He did not say *so*, my lady, because his ugly mouth never framed such a sentence, but he told me that his master had at one time or other made love to all of them, and had snared them all by different contrivances under his roof. But," said she, drawing close to Louisa, "one shocking thing I did hear, enough to make one's hair stand of an end. There is a nun here amongst the rest, whom the Chevalier stole out of a Neapolitan convent, and if they could catch her, she would be burned, or buried alive. Her name is sister Dominica: Scharaffa helped to carry her off, and now he says, he wishes she was dead, for there's more plague with her than all the girls in the house."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Madame de

Wolfstein; "and was this wretched woman in the group who received us to-night?"

"Oh no, my lady! She wanders about the house like a maniac in her nun's habit, and has even tried to escape, that she may surrender herself up; but the Chevalier, who does not care for many things, he has such powerful friends, thinks this might bring him into trouble, and if she makes any more attempts to be off, she will be secured in a dark dungeon; where she may live and die, and no one ever be the wiser; or perhaps, poor soul! they may take the shortest method with her, for a sin more or less is a trifle in the account between Satan and my master."

"Peace, peace, Barbara!!"

"Methinks, my lady, I hear something stir in the next room!" And she immediately approached the door, which, at her touch, flew open: it was illumined by several tapers, and a table spread with rare and delicate viands, served on the finest china, stood in the centre:—those

who placed it there were no longer visible, and Barbara was half disposed to believe, that amongst the strange inhabitants of the castle of Lornberg, wizards and magicians might be numbered. It was long since either had tasted food, and both partook thankfully of the tempting repast before them:—there were wines of different sorts and hues; but the invisible hands had filled a small glass from a bottle of rich Tuscan, by which lay a slip of paper, with the words, "Wolfstein pledges his bride." It was one of the singularities of this inconsistent being, that he would, from time to time, address such minute and insignificant courtesies to her, whom it seemed, in all material instances, his delight to outrage and insult. The repast ended, they quitted the apartment. The same slight sound was heard, which had announced the arrival of supper, and almost immediately, when the curious Barbara again opened the door, the lights, the table, and all that was thereon, had

disappeared. A door on the opposite side of Madame de Wolfsteïn's chamber led through an elegant dressing-room to that of her woman. The toils of a long and arduous journey, inhanced by so much mental suffering as they had endured, had so subdued their strength, that each easily yielded up their senses to a salutary and refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER VII.

——"You shall give me leave
To play the broker in mine own behalf;
And to that end, I shortly mind to leave you."—
Shakspeare.

MADAME de Wolfstein and her attendant had been some time risen, when a tap at the door claimed their attention. Their visitor was the holy Felix, who came to mingle his morning orisons with those of Louisa, and offer her such pious consolations as were but too necessary under the calamitous circumstances in which she was involved. In the course of their mutual communications, it appeared, that amid the luxurious accommodations of the castle, it possessed neither chapel, nor apartment of any kind for the especial purpose of religious worship. A chapel

indeed there was, but it had been for many years grievously profaned, and rendered incapable of being applied to pious uses, Wolfsteïn having converted it into a theatre.—Louisa therefore led the Confessor through the suite of apartments destined for her occupation, and they made choice of one, which commanded from its bay window a magnificent marine view, for the oriel; and the father promised he would endeavour to obtain permission to go to Venice, and procure such holy articles as were necessary for the completion of their purpose. Louisa whispered in the shuddering ear of this good man, the horrible sacrilege which had been revealed to her by Barbara.— — —

"My child," he replied, crossing himself in deep consternation, "we ought not to weary of life, since it is plain there is still work appointed for us to do:—I will seek this poor strayed sheep, and save her if possible."

Engaged in similar contemplations, the

hour passed calmly and usefully; when one of the beautiful thoughtless damsels of the castle entered the apartment, and kneeling to Madame de Wolfsteïn, presented her a basket of sandal wood, filled with roses, jessamine and orange blossoms, on which lay a billet, which she said contained the morning salutations of the Lord of Lornberg.—It bore a request, couched in the most courteous terms, to be permitted to partake her breakfast, when her pleasure for the disposal of the remainder of the day might be declared. The damsel, whose name was Kara, and who was a little Turkish girl, as soon as Louisa had perused her husband's greeting, presented her with a sheet of ornamented paper, and a golden style, and Louisa briefly traced her consent to the request of her Lord. The Confessor took his leave, and Wolfsteïn was with her almost instantly. His manner on this occasion wore something of the softness and courtesy of former days, but no ex-

ternal graces could erase from the thoughts of his wretched bride the treachery, barbarity, and depravity of his nature.—She dissembled her feelings, but unmixed abhorrence was the ruling sentiment of her heart, as she looked on Wolfsteïn. Perceiving that either weary of the exercise of his rude tyranny, or that for some secret purpose he was resolved to treat her with a degree of amenity which she had not expected ever again to experience, she took courage, and mentioned the subject of the oriel, and ventured even to request permission for the friar to sail to Venice, and procure the means for fitting up the room as a small chapel.

"It is yours, Louisa," was the reply; "and, provided I am not molested by these weaknesses, you may, in moderation, indulge them. I permitted you to bring the friar, because he has not, like the rest of his fraternity, any genius for meddling or intrigue. I do not want a priest with eyes and ears, for Lornberg castle has its

mysteries. He shall have a gondola for his own use, and may go to-morrow, if he pleases, and buy a boat full of toys for his baby house; but, besides his simplicity, I had another motive for bringing him hither: his skill in medicine may be often useful, and he will not lose his time, if, in procuring his spiritual nostrums, he supplies himself with such drugs as may be requisite in our remote station. I have no doubt we shall find him employment."

Now, with all the polish and suavity he could so skilfully assume, he requested his wife to signify her pleasure for the morning, and seeing her hesitate,

"Shall I," said he, "lead you round the ramparts, and show you the magnificent scene they command? The day is glorious, and the sunbeams glance upon the waves till the Adriatic looks like a sheet of liquid gold. I will show you my gardens, my vineyards, my kiosks and pavilions, and introduce you to my men of war. I

have not brought you to a hermitage, Louisa."

She readily acquiesced in his proposal: as they wound along the ramparts, his remarks on the splendid scenery beneath them were pregnant with that fine taste which was perverted to the most disgraceful purposes, and her walk would have been one of enjoyment, had the heart of her companion been as excellent as his intellect. When they descended into the gardens, the same admirable taste was conspicuous: it was noon, and the heat was becoming intense, but the sun was effectually debarred entrance through the thick boughs of the lofty trees under which they walked, and which were preserved in the liveliest verdure by innumerable little fountains, whose shining waters dashed over their marble basins, the spray of which spread far around in refreshing mists. Wolfstein seemed to take pleasure in exhibiting to his bride the luxurious enchantments of the abode

to which he had brought her, and she would not awaken the ferocity of his disposition, by betraying the absence and indifference with which she looked on all things. She had remarked, as they paced the battlements, that the castle was strongly fortified, and the number of soldiers seemed disproportioned to the need of a private noble. She observed,

"Your castle is quite a garrison, Chevalier."

"Yes," he replied, "my interests are numerous and intricate:—I am entangled in many schemes, and from such entanglements I derive my power: nevertheless, they are not without their peril, and for that I am always prepared."

As they returned within the castle, "The marine breeze," said he, "has had a charming effect—you are beautiful. I must show you to some of my people. I will have you, therefore, appear this day at table in such attire as befits the bride of the Lord of Lornberg."

When the hour of dinner arrived, Louisa, who had minutely followed the commands of her husband, and selected for her dress the most splendid robe in her possession, was ready, when he appeared at the door of her apartment, to lead her to the banqueting hall.

"You are a good girl," said he, glancing his eye over her figure: "this will do—for a while at least."

The banqueting room was already filled with guests, and a raised gallery at its upper end with minstrels, who saluted the entrance of the bride and bridegroom with a symphony. Many gentlemen were present, all in the uniform of the castle, which bore no resemblance to any Louisa had ever seen before, being entirely black, enlivened only by the gold belt and epaulette;—each officer wore his sabre and his dagger, and, which appeared somewhat singular, each had his brace of pistols in his belt. They were all fine, tall, well-formed men, and all had

black hair, and dark complexions, every countenance being rendered fiercer by a huge pair of mustachios. These men were Neapolitans, Ragusans, Greeks; and, whatever might be their other qualifications for the service of their fierce and extraordinary chief, he had evidently selected them with a childish and fanciful regard to uniformity of appearance. Captain Pandulfo was commandant of the castle guard: he had been already presented to Louisa, and he, and a youth named Rufo, whom Wolfsteïn appeared bent on distinguishing, took their places on each side of her at table. Zanina and Kara were of the party, and when first Madame de Wolfsteïn perceived their presence, a sentiment of offended dignity made her hesitate to seat herself. Her spouse remarked the scruple, and observing the direction of her eye, said haughtily, "Be content, madam! All is as it should be; for my pleasure is law at Lornberg."

It was some time ere he recovered the temper this incident had ruffled, and Louisa was aware that ever and anon he directed towards her a scowling and sinister glance. At length he ordered his cup-bearer, whom he called Corvlo, and who, though in boy's clothes, was an Italian girl, to bear the cup of state to the bride, that she might drink of it, and then bring it to him: his order being obeyed, he took a copious draught from it, and next presented it to Zanina, who sate on his right hand, after which it passed round the circle.—The men between whom Louisa was seated seemed to regard her with admiration, especially Pandulfo, who stole at her occasionally a glance in which pity and curiosity were mingled. As the wine circulated, the conversation became loud and general, and Louisa timidly besought permission to retire.

"Let us not believe you already weary of your friends, madam," was the reply.

—"It would be ungrateful, for your presence is so precious we cannot part with you yet. Rufo, I have not congratulated you on your late exploit;—a more adroit performance was never executed by so unpractised a youth."

Rufo's black eyes sparkled—"May all your foes, Chevalier," said he, lifting a goblet to his lips, "fall into as sure hands as did the old Marchese! But in truth, Wolfsteïn, you are well served:—Bruno and Zastrow the Pole were able coadjutors; I must not rob them of their share in the merit."

"How did you manage it at last?"

"Oh, it was very simple—the great difficulty lay in selecting our moment;—we lay in wait a night or two without success:—at length the crisis came. We dogged him from the cassino, where he had played late;—he had just dismissed his gondolieri, and was entering his own portico, when I flung the back of his mantle over his head: the daggers of

Bruno and Zastrow soon completed the enterprise. We ascertained presently his gains at the cassino, and threw him into the canal;—that one splash was all the noise we made!—I would not boast, but never was a man disposed of more briefly, silently, and effectually. We were at home by two, you know, Pandulfo."

"I shall know how to thank you, my friend Rufo," said the chief of the castle, with a look of ghastly satisfaction—"What think you of sending Bruno and Zastrow to the mountains?—They would be a glorious acquisition there."

"True, Chevalier, but they are not needed—Ranuzzo has already a strong band of incomparable spirits.—Why should we weaken ourselves? Besides, these occasional midnight manœuvres require as desperate a hand and as stout a heart every whit as your forest adventures—No, no, we cannot spare these myrmidons!"

"You shall have your own way, Rufo,"

said Wolfsteïn, in a conciliating tone. The young ruffian was evidently elated by wine and praise, and his manner soon became more conspicuously bold and presumptuous than that of the rest. Pandulfo's eyes warily examined the countenance of Wolfsteïn's bride, and he perceived, without difficulty, that she was making such deadly discoveries, as hardly left her power to support herself. As Rufo was now occupied by his own merits, and in trying the extent of his interest with his chief, Pandulfo ventured to say in a low voice to Louisa,

"I fear, madam, our profession is only now made known to you, and, if so, you will, perhaps, have many an early and cherished prejudice to forego;—to yield, however, or at least to seem to yield, till habit reconciles you to necessity, is all that remains. Disguise your aversion; it will only embitter your lot."

"Surely, sir," said Louisa, struck with the expression that softened his fierce

countenance, "you are not by nature a ruffian."

"I am not, madam.—One false step ruined me, or rather I should say obliged me to the adoption of new habits.—At sixteen, no one could have foretold my destiny—yet you see, lady, how custom hardens a man.—Whatever nature intended me for, I am now a ruffian."

There seemed something forced in the firmness with which this was uttered, and Louisa distinguished a deep sigh in spite of the struggle which was made to suppress it. Presently the Chevalier arose, and requested the captain to lead the bride into the adjoining saloon, whither all the party except a few officers who had not satisfied themselves with the juice of the Tuscan grape, followed, and Zanina flew to collect her companions. After witnessing the performance of a ballet, Louisa was permitted to withdraw.

Such were the companions amongst whom this most unfortunate lady appeared de-

stined to waste the remainder of her weary life. Many days closely resembling the one I have described—days of outrage, of horror, and misery passed over her head, and it seemed almost impossible to give force or novelty to the insults which were accumulated on her.—It did not seldom occur that the lord of Lornberg would absent himself for a week, perhaps for a month, from the castle, and these were periods of comparative tranquillity. Besides Felix and her faithful Barbara she had no one on whom she could even look without disgust, although she could not but distinguish Captain Pandulfo by harbouring towards him a somewhat less confirmed aversion than for any of his comrades: for the young assassin Rufo her detestation knew no bounds, and he seemed to behold her with a corresponding sentiment.

Once, during a prolonged absence of the chief of the castle, the countenance of Felix, who was no adept at concealing his feelings, wore a singular

expression of thankful emotion: "Alas! my father," said Louisa, as she looked earnestly in his face, "what can have happened under this roof, to have awakened that smile of pious gladness?"

"Did I smile, my daughter?—Do not question me—I would fain have you remain unimpeachable respecting the deed I have accomplished."

"Yet it has cheered your spirits, father," said she, bursting into tears. "Oh! when will a gleam of cheerfulness open upon mine?—When shall I smile?"

Finding he could not withhold from her the secret in which his benevolent spirit was exulting, he told her that he had succeeded in carrying the penitent nun to Venice; that he had, at her own earnest prayer, placed her in a convent governed by the most austere rules; that he had carried her thither in a secular dress, and had been able, without infringing truth, to conceal entirely her former profession; that he had obtained her admission with-

out the form of noviciate, and that the following day she would be once more dedicated to that holy service which she had been induced so fatally and criminally to renounce. Louisa, while she partook the friar's thankfulness, was astonished at his successful perseverance.

"My child," said he, "it is not my least cause of rejoicing that *all* the inhabitants of this castle are not hardened in villany. I have been aided, otherwise I could scarcely have accomplished my purpose. Believe me, my beloved daughter, whatever sorrows we are doomed to endure in this place, we have not been brought hither in vain."

He now proceeded to explain that Pandulfo had sought every opportunity for conversing with him in private, which had occurred since the day when he first entered Lornberg castle; that he even feigned sickness, in order more at leisure to invite and listen to the admonitions and consolations of the pious ecclesiastic;

that he had besought his advice, whether he should, as he easily might, fly from his present situation and devote the remainder of his days to a monastic life, or, by remaining, act as a check on the ruffians under his command, and perhaps influence some of them to relent likewise, and above all to alleviate as much as possible the sufferings of many prisoners pining in the subterraneous dungeons of the castle.

"Since it appears, my son," said Felix, "that your keeping your present station may prove a blessing to numbers, forsake it not, but wait patiently till the hour arrives which will surely deliver you."

By the means of Pandulfo, Felix had visited the prisoners, had administered to their necessities both mental and bodily, and instructed his willing convert how effectually to alleviate their cruel situation, when Wolfsteïn's presence in the castle would render his visits less practicable. Generally when the Chevalier

was absent, Rufo was his companion, but Scharaffa was left as a trusty spy, whose vigilance was not easily eluded; nevertheless, Felix and Pandulfo had for once outwitted him. For some days subsequent to the escape of Sister Dominica, the wretch was restlessly, but fruitlessly, employed in searching for her, but so dexterously had her evasion been contrived, that not a trace could he discover, and he could only flatter himself with the hope that she had put an end to her existence by drowning, a catastrophe to which, from the distracted state of her mind, he had often looked as the termination of his troublesome charge. Wolfsteïn had trusted too implicitly to the simple character of Father Felix, and to the philosophical abstraction of his thoughts. Little did he guess how busy a life this contemplative man would spend at Lornberg, and little was he aware, that at the end of a few months, the commandant of his troops, and twenty of those he commanded, had each his

missal in his pocket and his agnus on his bosom. Every one of these regarded Felix as the delegate sent from Heaven for his especial rescue from perdition, and the slightest admonition breathed from his lips would have superseded the loudest command of Wolfsteïn, who remained all the while perfectly unconscious of the reformation wrought within his walls. Felix, as from time to time, in grateful exultation, he imparted his progress to Madame de Wolfsteïn, acknowledged, that even the loss of his dearly beloved Saint Chrysostom had been providential.

"But for that, my daughter, I should have surrendered myself up to study, and, buried in contemplation of the things of another world, might never have opened my eyes to the good work which Heaven is pleased to allot me in this."

It was about the middle of November, when, at one of the riotous feasts held by Wolfsteïn in celebration of some of his

mysterious successes, and at which his wife had been ordered to assist, a command now less frequently enforced than in the earlier season of their marriage, a dispute arose which threatened to be the prelude to a scene of sanguinary violence. Zanina, the beautiful Venetian, always sate at the right hand of the lord of the castle, and on the present occasion held her accustomed place.—It happened that Wolfsteïn, who had been engaged in conversation with some one on his left, observed in turning to look on Zanina, that after touching her goblet with her lips, she gave it, with a significant look, to Corylo, who immediately bore it to the farther end of the table where Rufo sate near Louisa.—Rufo took the cup, and casting on the lovely Venetian a glance of passionate gratitude, was about to swallow the contents, when Wolfsteïn rose, and in a voice almost choked with fury, cried, "Drink not for your life! Set down the cup or you die."

" If it be poison, I'll drink it," cried Rufo, rising likewise and applying the goblet to his lips.

" And poison then it shall be, quick poison, presumptuous minion! for death shall follow it."

Zanina prevented Wolfsteïn from reaching Rufo by clinging to his arms, and the officers all called on the offender to quit the room; he had already drawn a pistol from his belt and stood sullenly on the defensive, but at length yielded to the remonstrances of his comrades and quitted the room, while Wolfsteïn continued raving like a maniac. Pandulfo, in the very commencement of the confusion, had led the lady of the castle to her apartments, as he expected the scene of uproar to end in some appalling catastrophe, and was not sorry to miss Rufo on his re-entrance. He found Wolfsteïn reiterating his threats of summary vengeance, and the officers, in one voice, protesting against any violence being practised on.

their comrade for what had happened, although, being considered a favourite, he had in fact no friends amongst his equals, while all the most desperate of the soldiery idolized him for his daring. The clamour at length in some measure subsiding, Pandulfo, who after the chief of Lornberg, had a superior voice in the assembly, suggested calmly that it would be well to consider the consequences of such an arbitrary proceeding as was threatened.—" Supposing, sir, that *we* should all remain passive; Rufo is beloved by the soldiers, and a formidable band of them, with Bruno and Zastrow at their head, will mutiny to avenge him. You know best how you are prepared to meet such a contingency;—but all this is the effect of wine, to-morrow no memory will harbour it: in truth Rufo was not to blame, there sits the delinquent. Had the fair Zanina pledged *me*, I must have done as Rufo did.—Which of you would not?"

" Not one of us," was the reply.

"No," continued Pandulfo, "nor would any one, but such a craven, as our gallant chief would spurn from his band! Be just, noble Wolfsteïn, and confess that Rufo could not refuse to answer the fair one's pledge."

Pandulfo conquered; for his post and his character made him powerful in the castle: he undertook to seek the angry Rufo, and persuade him to apologise to his chief, which was performed, but as reluctantly and with as much brevity as possible, a mutual scowl accompanying the cold touch of each other's hand. Zanina was sent sobbing to her apartment, and the Chevalier harboured, in his dark bosom, the resolution of shortly making himself fatal amends for this forced reconciliation. But he was disappointed, for the following day, when the inmates of the castle assembled at the feast, no Rufo, no *Zanina* appeared; a vain search was made, and ended in the conviction that they were fled together, an event which

gave Wolfsteïn heavier and more disquieting cause for meditation than the mere loss of a fickle courtezan, or a presumptuous and fiery dependant, since the latter bore with him many a dangerous secret.

CHAPTER VIII.

" Such men have been, of whom it may be said
Their spirits conquer'd when their clay was cold."
Joanna Baillie.

It was on the night of November the 15th, that the fierce and arduous struggle between Gustavus of Sweden, the lion of the North, and the scarcely less celebrated commander of the forces of the empire, arrived at the eve of its crisis. The Duke of Friedland, by the aid of Fieramosca, had discovered that the Anareta, or planet of death, in the nativity of his illustrious rival, pointed to November, and had, therefore, by many a masterly and skilful manœuvre, contrived to protract this great personal trial to this period. An impenetrable fog covered the eventful morning of the 16th, and not till noon, when the sun shone

forth in his splendor, was this natural curtain withdrawn, when two vast armies were discovered drawn up in order of battle on each side the high road which skirts the plain of Lutzen. The scene was inconceivably grand and awful—Gustavus gave out, in a loud voice, the 40th Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength," which was sung by the whole army, accompanied by military music, and then led forward his troops. Both sides fought with unparalleled desperation, being animated by every art of their respective leaders; but the imperialists being seasonably reinforced by the return of General Pappenheim's wing, which had been detached on some distant expedition, the Swedes were repulsed frequently, while their magnanimous sovereign, with the most heroic resolution, as frequently rallied and led them back. Thus the fate of the conflict continued some time in suspense; but Gustavus perceiving that his left gave ground be-

fore the fire of the Imperialists, attended by the Duke of Saxe Lauenburgh, and a party of horsemen, galloped towards the shrinking wing. In the midst of his career, he encountered a few imperial horse, led by a youth, who seemed resolved to push them wherever glory tempted or danger threatened. This youth dashed into the midst of the Swedes, and called loudly on the monarch to surrender, but Gustavus raising his pistol to fire on the assailant, was, by one of the Austrians, shot in the arm, while the bullet of his first antagonist, nearly at the same moment, entered his breast, and he fell from his saddle, exclaiming, "My God! my God!" while the few Swedes, by whom he was immediately surrounded, were seized with panic, and joined the main body on a gallop, carrying with them the mournful and discouraging news of the fall of the royal hero. The hussar, by whom the fatal shot was fired, threw himself from his horse, and cried urgently

on Desmond (for it was young Vallensteïn) to assist him in raising and bearing away the expiring monarch; but while they lifted him from the ground, he sank a corpse in their arms.

Pappenheim's division, of which Lindau's regiment made a part, now charged, and as it was to the Margrave's corps Vallensteïn and Desmond had attached themselves as volunteers, they were obliged in the sudden rush to relinquish their purpose, and abandon the body; but Desmond, taking off his hat, and waving it as he rode, cried. "Long live Ferdinand! There lies Gustavus!"

As soon as the shock of the charge enabled Lindau to pause, he demanded the Lieutenant's meaning, who exultingly proclaimed his friend's achievement. The flight of the Duke of Saxe Lauenburgh, who rode like a madman back upon the Swedish army, fearful of sharing the fate of his illustrious companion, has occasioned his name to be stained by an

imputation far more foul and odious than that of cowardice, since there were not a few who attributed the death of Gustavus to his treachery, and the immediate circumstances attending that event are obscurely and variously stated by historians. Meanwhile the brave Bernard, Duke of Saxe Weimar, found means to have it reported that the King was alive, but in the hands of the enemy, and the idea of rescuing their beloved leader inspired the troops with almost supernatural force and fury. In the midst of the renewed conflict, Pappenheim received a mortal wound, and as he was seen carrying off the field, a shout arose that the battle was lost. Lindau and the brave volunteers performed wonders of valour, but it was decreed, that though Gustavus must perish on that field, the echo of his name should secure the victory to his troops. The fog which had covered the morning, again rolled over the contending armies, and closed in the evening, while the re-

treat of the Duke of Friedland, during the night, leaving his artillery behind him, decided that the laurel was won by the Swedes, and must be entwined with the cypress for the pale brow of their untimely perished hero. The haughty spirit of the imperial general was exasperated to fury at the thought that his dead rival had driven him from the field, and his indignation was revealed by several acts of tremendous severity. Immediately on his return to Bohemia, seventeen of his officers were executed almost without a hearing, and the names of fifty others, by being attached to a gibbet, rendered for ever infamous, while those who had distinguished themselves, or whom he had private reasons conspicuously to favour, were remunerated with his usual splendid and unlimited magnificence. Octavius Piccolomini, a General who had greatly signalised himself, received from him a present of 10,000 dollars. Knowing that it was a detach-

ment from the regiment of Lindau which surrounded the Swedish monarch at the moment of his death, and likewise being apprised of the noble efforts made by the Margrave and his companions, immediately previous to the intervention of the fog, he sent for that young Colonel, and having knighted him, presented him with a sabre worth 500 dollars, and two fine chargers. There was something in Lindau's countenance which the Duke did not comprehend.

"Have you any request to make, Colonel Lindau? Speak, sir, I shall not easily refuse you."

The Margrave hesitated. "Do you know, sir, from whose hand Gustavus of Sweden received his death?"

"Show me the man, and I will exhaust my power of rewarding upon his head! Where is he?"

"I cannot show him to your Highness, for I know not where he is, nor when, nor how, your Highness's favour may

reach him; but Gustavus fell in fair encounter with your son, Count Casimir of Vallensteïn."

A convulsive motion shook the muscles of the Duke's face, and no one could discern whether it was the sudden operation of pleasure or pain; he paused. "Are you sure of this, Lindau?"

"As sure, as that it is your Highness who speaks to me, and I am likewse sure that the same hand, supported by that of the faithful and gallant Desmond, twice rescued the lamented Pappenheim ere he met his death blow."

"Casimir is worthy of me!" said the Duke, and wringing the hand of Lindau, he added, while a tear, if in truth it was a tear, stood in his eye, "Is he safe, Lindau?"

"I know not, my Lord, for when that dense fog fell like a veil over every object, we were separated, and I have not seen him or his comrade since."

"Margrave, I have given you proof

that I know how to distinguish merit, and remunerate service. If Casimir seeks you, deliver him without question to me; —you can neither apprehend risk for him, nor accuse yourself of treachery, in restoring a son to the arms of his father. —An attempt to influence his will would be fruitless—you must surprise him into that for which he will one day thank you. —Have I your promise?"

"My Lord, you may command my life, but up to this hour my honour is clear from imputation,—and, pardon me, I will so preserve it."

"Well, sir, you are as stubborn in prejudice as Casimir himself, and I have no time to waste on you; but you must not take it ill, Colonel, if you find yourself watched."

With this hint they parted. The next officer for whom the Duke inquired, in order to reward him according to his deserts, was his brother-in-law, Count Harrach, who had, with many misgivings,

glanced his eye over the names appended to the gibbet; his however was not of this degraded company.

"Harrach," said the Duke, bending on him the eye of a falcon, "my counsel shall be brief—Resume your velvet coat without delay. I have discovered that the atmosphere of a court suits your constitution better than that of a camp, since etiquettes and civilities are so inveterate in your nature, you could not prevail on yourself to treat even the enemy with the least rudeness.—In short, sir," said he, raising his voice to a pitch which caused a strong vibration on the nerves of Count Harrach, "you are a coward,—and had you not been the brother of Casimir's mother, I should have taken another mode of telling you so.—Go home, sir, and keep your own counsel."

The imperative words of this very dear and illustrious brother were obeyed to the letter. Count Harrach resumed his velvet coat and his point ruff and

ruffles, went back to court, and kept his own secret.

That same evening, as Lindau sate within his quarters, writing to his beloved sister Ulrica a detailed account of the battle of Lutzen, a man, wrapped in the camp cloak of a common soldier, entered his apartment, and having carefully closed the door, threw off his mantle, and crying, "I know I am safe with Lindau," revealed Casimir of Vallensteïn.

"That is more than I know, my dear Count," said the Margrave, as he rose in consternation, and looking out, he called to the sentinel on guard, "admit no one to me on any pretence, and if orders come from the Duke, instead of letting the bearer pass, summon me forth."

Vallenstein abruptly explained that the object which had induced him to venture into the close precincts of his father, was the hope of obtaining intelligence of his faithful friend, whom from the moment the mist covered them on the evening of

the 16th, he had never beheld. He had in vain explored the field of Lutzen for the body, supposing he might have fallen, but neither there nor elsewhere could he discover the slightest trace of him. Lindau freely promised every aid in his power, and having so dismissed the subject, he began to make trial of the filial dispositions of Casimir, and to persuade him to listen to some mediatory arguments.

"I could not have believed you thus obdurate, Casimir. Your father yearns after you, and what son on earth, but yourself, would not think it glorious to call that wonderful being father?"

"Lindau, the mystery will one day be revealed—You cannot judge at present, between the Duke of Friedland and myself. Suffice it, that with a heart prone to filial affection, attached even with enthusiasm to the person of my father, dazzled by his genius, proud of his glory, we are for ever disunited.—Here let the subject

close between us; I will not speak of it again."

The words had scarcely passed his lips when some faint rumour was distinguishable at the door, which, on opening, discovered the Duke.

"Do not be surprised, Margrave—I gave you notice you were under surveillance! So, Count Casimir! I am obliged to have recourse to stratagem to procure a conference with an unnatural son! Margrave, good night."

And taking the young Count's arm, he quitted Lindau's quarters, and without speaking pursued his course to his own, where being arrived, he led the way to a private apartment, the door of which having fastened, he began, as was his custom when agitated, to pace rapidly to and fro.

"Well, sir," said he at length, stopping abruptly, and looking earnestly in his son's face, "Are we friends or enemies? Speak."

"I am your friend, sir; the friend of your honour, your conscience, your eternal peace."

"Cant! base hypocritical cant, unworthy a man and a soldier! Some priest, some hooded fanatic has bewitched you, Casimir!—Where is your philosophy? Oh, my son, could I but once prevail with you to abandon the weak fables that enslave you, you bear a spirit and a hand gloriously to execute whatever my intellect conceives.—Think, think for an instant; united, what may we not achieve?"

"The very utmost pitch of human grandeur—but be not deceived, my father—I will never, never, pay the price! I will not pledge my soul to Satan for all the crowns in Europe."

"Effeminate, puerile boy! Who is Satan? What is he? An old woman's bundle of rags to scare a froward baby! The very monks would laugh at you!—I trusted, Casimir, that time and corroborating circumstances would have come in

aid of filial duty, and brought you ere this to the arms of your father. Do you not see," said he, solemnly, "that destiny, as well as nature, has sealed you my ally, my principal and most effective coadjutor? Was not your hand elected from among the hands of multitudes, to fulfil on Gustavus of Sweden that decree which, on the hour of his birth, appointed the hour of his death? Can you not perceive that you are impiously thwarting fate as well as outraging nature? And will you blindly, desperately oppose the grand, eternal, irreversible march of events? After all, Casimir, the tide *will* flow."

"Yes, my father, I have read 'offences *will* come; but woe unto him by whom they come.' Since time began offences *have* come, but this is no argument to justify the offender. Treasons, perjuries, violences, have arisen, and will arise, but I will never be a traitor, a dissembler, or a ruffian! I may not have power to arrest

the tide of evil, but I will not augment it."

"Well, sir, I will tell you the very utmost you can do in the way of resistance, since that is the way in which you are bent.—You can cross your father's heart with a sickening pang, you can tempt him to revile the memory of her with whose milk you have imbibed your froward and headstrong dispositions, but to pause or retrograde one instant, one inch, on my predestined path, you shall never compel me."

Casimir stood with folded arms, and his eyes riveted to the floor, while his father, now assuming a more softened aspect, perused his countenance.

"Methinks," said he, "your rebellion has not been unpunished—How lean and wasted you are! No, nature never formed you for the part you are acting! Abandon it, my son."

He extended his arms, and Vallensteïn, whose affections yearned towards his

father, rushed into them, and for a few moments all difference of opinion, all discordance of sentiment, was forgotten. The Duke still kept his arm over his son's shoulder, and looked at him as if he considered him half conquered.

"One word from you, Casimir, and it might be always thus."

"Alas, my father, that word never will be uttered!"

"Enough, sir. Too much time and breath have been wasted on an unattainable object, and, since what must be must be, to fate I consign the matter. Probably your affairs are not so urgent as to refuse you leisure to sup with your old general. You will be my guest to-night?"

"Gladly, sir."

"Well then, let all fruitless discussion cease between us—I will send for Lindau and Winterfeldt, and we will make a social meal of it."

The two officers readily obeyed the summons, and the latter greeted Casimir

with equal surprise and joy, for it had been some time the current opinion of the army, that a rooted animosity existed between the generalissimo and his son, nor were there wanting some shrewd spirits, who guessed, and guessed rightly, at the cause. Amongst these however were neither Lindau nor Winterfeldt, who, though each gifted with his due proportion of sound, manly intellect, were neither of them remarkable for sagacity in scenting a plot, and therefore contented themselves with marvelling and lamenting that such a feud should exist between two such men. They assisted at this apparent reunion, with honest, heart-felt satisfaction, entertaining no suspicion that it was a mere transient, and even hollow truce. Casimir and Winterfeldt openly exchanged expressions of mutual regret for the disappearance of Desmond, which they could only attribute to his death, and to his body having fallen in some spot where it had evaded the anxious search of his

friend. The battle of Lutzen was fought over again, and Casimir, at the request of his father, modestly detailed the immediate circumstances attending the fall of Gustavus; but instead of assuming credit to himself, he bitterly deplored his own rashness.

"Had I not," said he, "in the heat and tumult of the moment, fired that fatal shot, you, my father, might now have exulted in the possession of a captive hero. The hope of a gallant nation would not have now been extinct, and the magnanimous soul of Gustavus would still enrich and adorn the world with its virtues.—Desmond, seeing the King level his pistol at my head, shot him through the arm, and, so disabled, he could not have resisted, he must inevitably have fallen into our hands, for Saxe Lauenburgh waited not to ascertain the event, but ere the flash of our pistols had vanished, deserted his master."

"Miscreant!" exclaimed the Duke, "I would he had deserted to me."

"Would your highness have received him?" cried Lindau and Winterfeldt in one voice.

"Yes, and have hung him up for an example to my officers."

The topics discussed were such as became a military feast, and all was social harmony; for the Duke, on this occasion, laid aside, to an unwonted degree, the austere aspect of authority of which he had latterly very seldom divested himself. The night was somewhat advanced ere the two officers made their bows to their commander, and shook hands with Casimir, well content in the belief that he would now resume his post amongst them, and that whatever had caused his absence was effectually removed. When they were gone,

"Whatever your plans may be, Casimir," said the Duke, "I conclude you are at present ill provided with the means

to accomplish them—It probably is not your intention to remain with me, since my measures and your opinions would be at constant variance, but we will at least meet to-morrow ere you depart, for though you will not assist me, I may be essentially useful to you without offending any of your prejudices."

Having exchanged a kind good night, young Vallensteïn was ushered into an apartment contiguous to that of his father, and enjoyed a more refreshing slumber than he had done for many months; for the cordiality between the Duke and himself, notwithstanding the incompatibility of their principles, had proved consolatory to his feelings. In the morning the father and son breakfasted together at an early hour, and the Duke asked several questions respecting the immediate destination of Casimir, a point to which it was not easy to yield a very definite answer, since he hardly knew and little

cared whither he was going. Their meal being ended,

"It seems to me," said the Duke, "that you have not made up your mind relative to the course you would next steer,—I will with your leave supply to your will the direction it wants. For the present you are my prisoner, Casimir—I will not detain you here, because I feel your immediate atmosphere damps my spirits, and palsies my energies, but I will send you where you will be safe, till my views are accomplished."

"Do you fear to trust me at large, my father?" asked Casimir indignantly.

"I know not; but I am sure the measure I have adopted is such as prudence would prescribe; at all events, it is the result of mature deliberation, and it will not be shaken by remonstrance."

"Then, I will not remonstrate."

"Wisely resolved! Now then, farewell, Casimir!—When we meet again,

I will not invite you to co-operate in my labours, but to assist me in enjoying what I have accomplished by actions which will then have become past and irrevocable, and which, as you will not be able to revoke them, your philosophy will forbid you to deplore or deprecate. Once more, farewell, Casimir."

Young Vallensteïn did not refuse the offered hand of his father; he pressed it affectionately, and then without question or comment, descended the stairs and entered a carriage in which two subalterns awaited him, and which was surrounded by armed troops on horseback.

CHAPTER IX.

" The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!"
Shakspeare.

Wolfsteïn, ever since the elopement of Rufo and Zanina, had betrayed a restlessness and disquietude, very opposite to the usual insolent, cold security of his temper and manners. He seldom slept two nights together in his castle, business often required his presence at Venice, or other neighbouring places. Sometimes he would set forth, provided and escorted as if for a distant journey, and remain long absent. His garrison, strong as it seemed, was augmented, and Wolfsteïn was often conversing with his men in an affable familiar tone, making them presents, and

in short, exhibiting towards them a total alteration of demeanor. With the officers he was become mistrustful, capricious, sudden, making frequent and unexpected changes amongst them, while those who were displaced were not suffered to quit the walls, but kept in strict imprisonment, as though they would at a proper season be called to answer the charges their chief would bring against them. Pandulfo still apparently enjoyed his esteem and confidence, but did not rely implicitly on outward indications, perceiving that many of his comrades were caressed and treated with every show of favour up to the instant, when without the form of accusation they were cashiered and imprisoned. In fact, Wolfsteïn could not accuse, because he was actuated solely by the misgivings of his own dark mind; he was beset by apprehensions of he knew not what, being well aware that there was no point of the compass from which danger might not come to him. Until

the present period, he had always looked calmly and disdainfully on whatever menaced him, and smiled at the opportunity it afforded him for proving his incomparable intelligence and adroitness, never harbouring a suspicion that he could or should be foiled, since nothing was regarded by him as an obstacle. The confidence he reposed in his own Machiavelian talents was his bane, since it had led him to multiply his schemes to an infinite extent, and involved him in an endless labyrinth, the clue to which was become perplexed and entangled; in short, as he once expressed himself, he now found he had "too many men to move." Besides in proportion as the accumulation and intricacy of his affairs required a firmer nerve, a keener eye, and a more comprehensive intellect, were the faculties of Wolfsteïn declining instead of gaining force; for he had, in the indulgence of his temperament, forgotten the insidious properties of dissipation, and did not cal-

culate that he should rise from every scene of excess with unbraced nerves and a wavering brain, till the whole system would finally yield beneath the repetition.

It happened one fine spring morning that Louisa was taking the air on the castle ramparts, attended by Barbara, when she perceived Pandulfo approaching, accompanied by a person whose arms and legs were secured by light fetters, which, although they did not preclude the power of taking an uneasy exercise, were an effectual bar against escape. She came rather suddenly upon them, and Captain Pandulfo, who on all other occasions sedulously sought opportunity to converse with the lady of Lornberg, now, forgetful of his wonted courtesy, turned abruptly to avoid her, causing his captive companion to do likewise.

"For some reason," observed Madame de Wolfstein, "Pandulfo is averse to meeting us; let us therefore turn:—he cannot surely fear my disclosure of his

indulgence to his prisoner, whomsoever he may be, but perhaps he fears to involve me in some dangerous knowledge."

They turned, and looked behind them.

" See," said Barbara, " the poor young man is so overweighted by his fetters, he is obliged to support himself against the bastion! Did you ever see any thing so thin, madam?—And yet, what an elegant figure! I wonder who it can be!"

" Probably," answered Louisa, " one of the many officers who during the winter have fallen under the Chevalier's displeasure."

" Ah, see," said Barbara, in a compassionate tone, " Pandulfo knows not what to do with him! He cannot support himself farther!"

This exclamation of Barbara's induced Madame de Wolfsteïn again to look back, when she perceived that the poor captive vainly attempted to rise from the bastion against which he leaned, but that either the weight of his chains, or his own

weakness, rendered it impossible for him to stand without support, whilst Pandulfo's attention seemed divided between a visible dread lest they should approach nearer, and the situation of his companion.

" I am sure," said Barbara, " there can be no manner of harm in going to help him, poor youth! Look how awkwardly that great whiskered captain sets about it." At that moment, Pandulfo, leaving his charge to the support of the wall, came towards them.

" Lady," said he, " I have placed myself in an embarrassing predicament,—the gentleman you see has been many months a prisoner in this castle, and was placed under my care with charges of so positive a nature, and the exaction of such strict promises from me, as I could not without imminent risk, and some dishonour, infringe, to say nothing of the espionage of Scharaffa, which has been unremitting. The poor youth has been very ill, and the skill of our pious Con-

fessor has restored him, as it were, from death. This morning Scharaffa's vigilance has been diverted, and I have ventured to lead my captive forth to be refreshed by the air, for which he is pining—Father Felix said he would die without it. I dared not free him entirely from his fetters, lest our chief, whose return is very uncertain, might surprise us.—Just as we turned the angle, and beheld your approach, the heat of this warm spring sunshine overcame him, and I cannot remove him.—Can you supply me with any pungent scent which may dissipate the sudden faintness?"

"Oh yes, to be sure we can!" cried Barbara, "and I will come and help you, for men are such clumsy wretches about the sick. I saw you this moment, Captain Pandulfo, handling him just like a bear; though, no doubt, it was all out of kindness."

"Stay, stay, Signora! for mercy's sake!" exclaimed Pandulfo, and without

ceremony he pursued and caught her. "You must not, you *shall* not," added he, passionately, "approach the prisoner! You know not what you are about."

"Do not agitate yourself, captain," said Louisa: "we will not, by our indiscretion, involve you in trouble.—Take this volatile essence, it is almost infallible, and I trust you will be no sufferer from your humanity."

She then proceeded to instruct Pandulfo how he might better support his feeble companion, and entreated that he would venture to unfetter him, at least, till he was restored to his prison. This petition was willingly acceded to, and the captain had his hand upon the lock of the fetters, when, happening to cast a glance towards the sea, he perceived the Chevalier's barge just making for the castle landing-place; Wolfsteïn himself, his arms crossed, and his eyes directed to the objects on the ramparts, was standing on the deck.

"We are lost!" cried Pandulfo, as, with an almost supernatural effort, he rather carried than led the invalid to the stairs which wound from the castle ramparts to its base, and in a moment they were out of sight. Madame de Wolfsteïn and her attendant beheld the landing of the chief with indescribable terror, fearing they knew not what, both for the unhappy stranger, and the humane Pandulfo: certain they had been seen and recognised, they knew not whether it was better to descend immediately to their apartments, or remain with apparent composure pacing the battlements; while they were thus irresolute, the object of their terror joined them.

"Oh!" said he, fixing his keen eye on his wife's countenance, which underwent a rapid change beneath his gaze, "How agitating is sudden joy! My unexpected return produces an effect, which, if I did not know thee, Louisa, or if I were one of your jealous-pated spouses, I might

misconstrue.—How your little heart fluttered with gladness, when you saw Wolfsteïn's gondola approach the beach !. Did it not, my life ?"

" In truth, Chevalier, I did not look for your return so early," replied she, faintly.

" And yet," said he, " I did not name any definite period of absence ; but it is unspeakable gratification to a fond spouse to discover, on his return, that the partner of his soul spends the live-long hours of separation in watching till his sail shall recross the waters."

Madame de Wolfsteïn was but too well inured to these ironical commendations, which were often the prelude to fits of terrifying fury.—He dismissed Barbara, and, passing her arm through his, began to speak of the beauty and freshness of the morning, and on other indifferent and general topics,—at length stopping suddenly,

" I wonder," said he, " where Pan-

dulfo is to-day,—he is sick, I suppose, for it was Valetti who received me on my landing."

Louisa trembled, but spoke not.

"Do you find the air piercing, my love?" inquired her husband; while hardly knowing what she answered, and conscious of the trepidation she was betraying, she said, "Yes."

"Heavens!" cried he, "you have the ague, then! for the sun is intensely hot! Is it the ague, or is it the effect of your immoderate joy at my return? I believe it to be the latter. Now, speak truth; are you not shaking like an aspen with terror? And did you not think, when you saw your Wolfsteïn's boat, what a blessing it would be were the waves to ingulf it!—Come! No lies! I am not, as you know, one of your blind honest souls who cannot distinguish between genuine and counterfeit.—Who were those two men with whom you were in conference at the moment when the appearance of

my gondola inspired the whole group with consternation, visible even at that distance?"

"One of them I did not see near, and cannot tell who he was:—the other,"— and she hesitated.

"The other was my trusty commandant.—And are you *sure*, *quite sure*, that you did not see the face of the other? Will you," and he snatched the agnus which hung on her bosom, "will you kiss this, and tell me that you did not see his face, that you did not hear his voice, that you do not know his name?"

She kissed the agnus, and being reassured by questions so easily answered, she repeated deliberately each of the negatives he required.

"Very well, madam! I know that, although like all other women, you have a pretty turn for evasion, you would hold it a crime to utter a direct falsehood.— The matter is not in itself of consequence, but I wished to ascertain, pre-

cisely, how far Pandulfo had deviated from his duty."

"I believe, Chevalier," replied Louisa, timidly, "that I can exactly satisfy you on that point.—The beauty of the morning inviting me forth earlier than usual; attended by Barbara, I had reached the southern battlements, where I intended to pause, and inhale the reviving sea-breeze, when I perceived Pandulfo approaching with a stranger, whose fetters occasioned him to walk with difficulty. The commandant was evidently alarmed on beholding us, and instead of offering any salutation, turned away with his companion, whom he seemed desirous to hurry from our sight, but the extreme feebleness of the stranger, who sunk almost fainting against a bastion, frustrated his intention. Barbara indiscreetly flew to offer her assistance, and Pandulfo resisted the attempt, even with violence. Thus were we situated, when the sight of you, and probably the dread lest he

might fall under your displeasure, induced the commandant to redouble his efforts for the removal of his feeble charge, and they almost instantly disappeared."

"Then, what, in the name of common sense, made you shake like the leaves on that poplar?"

"Can you ask, Wolfsteïn? It is not my nature to tremble, but it has become my habit."

"Well," said he, affecting to disregard or misunderstand the insinuation, "this soft breeze and bright sky have soothed me into the temper of an angel, and I know not what I may be induced to concede to you;—for instance, *you*, who are so tender-hearted and compassionate, would, no doubt, fain see that sick prisoner at liberty—at least freed from his dungeon, and his fetters?"

She was too much accustomed to snares, not to apprehend them, and hesitated how to answer.

"Nay, since you are indifferent on the subject, it is all the same thing to me;—but I thought that either your curiosity or your sympathy might have pleaded in his favour, and was in the mood to grant you such a concession;—but, after all, he is safer where he is."

"Ah, Wolfstein! Does it *indeed* depend on me to open the door of his prison, and if I ask his release, will you *really* grant it?"

"Pray, madam, do I examine and cross-examine you? Do I not give immediate credence to whatever *you* deign to utter? Why should you doubt *my* words? But to show you that I am not trifling with you, I will tell you there is a courier waiting below with despatches of the utmost importance, only that my eagerness to salute my adored wife superseded his claims on my attention.—Now, I cannot engage positively for the liberation of my prisoner, till I have perused this man's credentials, but, if their

contents prove such as I expect, I will, on your mediation, give the prisoner you saw this morning the range of the castle, subject only to his parole, and a few slight conditions."

Madame de Wolfsteïn strove to make her thanks acceptable, though she still greatly mistrusted the performance of the promise, and expected that some mortifying and disappointing manœuvre was couched beneath it. On returning to the interior of the castle, she met Friar Felix, who awaited her, in visible uneasiness, having had the occurrence of the morning related to him both by Pandulfo and Barbara. He followed her to her apartment, and had scarcely courage to ask the result of her conference with the tyrant: nothing could exceed his astonishment at her relation, but he so far partook her doubts, that he could not for an instant venture to confide on the hope held forth.

"If," said the Confessor, "aught of evil should arise from this morning's in-

dulgence, I am the cause. Yet, alas! he must have perished in that murky, gloomy confinement, had another day passed over his head, and the pure air been still shut out from him. Poor youth, I could not see him perish; and were my life the sole forfeiture, right willingly would I pay it."

"Who is the prisoner, my father? And what is the cause of his rigorous confinement?"

"Preserve your ignorance, my child. It has been fortunate that you did not discover who he was previous to your examination on the subject by your husband. Whatever indulgence may now be granted, would, I doubt not, have been withheld, had Pandolfo so far transgressed his trust as to have allowed any one the knowledge you are desirous to obtain; and I am thankful to Providence that no accident or temptation has ever betrayed my feebleness into letting the secret transpire."

The step of Wolfsteïn now echoed along the corridor, and Felix, who had hitherto successfully avoided appearing at any of the entertainments in the castle, hurried away through the apartments, though, perhaps, his dread of being bidden to the feast was groundless.

"Was that your monk, Louisa?" said the Chevalier, as he entered.

"It was Father Felix."

"He is a very cowardly ecclesiastic! What is he afraid of? Time was, when he would bestow on me occasionally, the precious sentences of the 'golden-mouthed' Chrysostom. If he flies thus when he hears *my* step, what would he do if the devil himself were at hand! Far from emulating the prowess of Saint Dunstan, he would not so much as stay to throw a handful of holy water over his shoulder at him. But I suspect the Friar has more reasons than one for scampering at my approach; he is like

the rest of his crafty fraternity; but let him tread warily."

Louisa trembled, in the consciousness that the proceedings of the Confessor were not exactly calculated to meet the knowledge of Wolfsteïn, though she did her utmost to conceal the dismay with which she heard the implied accusation.

"Now, my dear," said he, "I come to redeem my pledge; I have kept my word with you;—you have ransomed the prisoner;—he awaits you in the banqueting hall, where, as lady of the castle, you will receive him."

He took her arm and they descended; the feast was already spread and the company assembled. Pandulfo and the stranger stood at a window which opened on the garden, and did not immediately perceive the entrance of Wolfsteïn and Louisa; when the former said,

"Count, lead Madame de Wolfsteïn to her seat."

The stranger turned to obey.—It was Casimir! He had been vainly courting to his aid the fortitude necessary to carry him through the present rencontre, but the feebleness of his frame seconded the agitation of his spirits; he opened his lips, but his tongue refused to articulate, and he stood for a moment unable to advance. When the eye of Madame de Wolfsteïn rested on the countenance of that wan, dejected, emaciated being, and recognised the once handsome, gallant Vallensteïn, she could not restrain her feelings; but in an accent of mingled astonishment, grief, and compassion, she exclaimed, "Casimir!" and burst into tears. Wolfsteïn regarded them both with scornful fury; at length,

"Incomparable!" he cried: "I did not in truth look to be rewarded by the exhibition of a scene so pathetic, for Madame de Wolfsteïn is parsimonious of her tears! I think, madam, these are the first you have shed since our marriage

—we have been *so happy!* Meanwhile, our feast is cooling; suppose we have the sequel to these attitudes and exclamations as entremets or dessert."

Vallensteïn scarcely heard this contemptuous speech: Louisa, Wilhelm's sister, stood before him, she spoke kindly to him, she wept for him! He saw, he heard nothing else, and he felt a healing balm glide into his chilled and broken heart. Fearful to forfeit the permission he had received to lead Madame de Wolfsteïn to the table, and seat himself beside her, he now hurried forward and grasped her hand in silence; while the rest of the company, consisting chiefly of the usual individuals, took their places likewise.

In spite of the woful alteration sorrow had wrought in Casimir Vallensteïn; in spite of his heavy eyes, his hollow cheek, and his drooping spectral form, the manly beauty with which nature had endowed him might be faded, but could not be

effaced, and even in the sight of one who had never beheld him in his pride, there was still that about him which could not fail of creating an irresistible interest. When the guests were arranged and the meal commenced, Wolfsteïn affected to occupy himself in general and indifferent conversation; but he was all the while intently scanning the looks and actions of the prisoner and his wife. It was sometime ere either could acquire courage to address the other. Casimir had never loved, save Louisa of Marchfeldt; he believed, indeed, that from the moment when she gave her hand to Wolfsteïn, his passion was extinct, and knew not by what name to call the restless, wretched regrets which survived it. Since he became her husband's captive, and knew she inhabited the same walls with himself, no one can wonder, that in defiance of every effort, her image was incessantly before him; but still, it was not love, it was pity for her fate, it was

an anxious interest for the happiness of Wilhelm's sister, it was curiosity. Love, in short, it could not be, and, therefore, it must be something else. That morning, when he so nearly fainted at the distant view of her figure, and the distant murmur of her voice, he began, indeed, to suspect that some symptoms of the old malady still hung about him; yet when his chains were so unexpectedly unfastened, and when he was invited to behold and converse with her once more, he had not fortitude to shun the danger, well as he was aware of the small strength he now possessed to dissemble his feelings. As for Louisa, in her mind the ideas of Wilhelm and Casimir had become inseparable; her infatuated rejection of the latter had equally outraged both, and often had the savage taunt of Wolfsteïn been realized, for often had the upbraiding spectre of her brother haunted her slumbers. The touch of the cold thin hand which led her to

the table, the pale sunken brow, and the hectic blush, which fled so swift across the wan cheek, all called to mind the last days of Wilhelm; and as she looked on Casimir, her heart smote her, and she felt that her consciousness of ingratitude to him outweighed all her other sufferings. There was something peculiarly embarrassing in the silence, which neither could break, although each sedulously examined their thoughts for some meet subject, something which might not involve any particular interest; at last, Louisa, remembering the friendship which subsisted between him and Princess Stolberg, asked if it was long since he had seen that lady.

"Ah, yes!" said he, "it is very long ago! Perhaps you may remember my departure from court, and we have not met since; but, though we never meet again, till that hour arrives which freezes the last kind sentiment in my heart, I will cherish the remembrance of one, who

showed such generous sympathy in the fate of an unhappy man."

"I do believe," replied Louisa, "that, although her manners were volatile to excess, she had many sterling qualities. Would," added she with a sigh, "that I had earlier appreciated her merits!—But alas! we are sad short-sighted beings; and few reflections weigh more grievously on the mind than those, which too late a sense of worth we have slighted, or services we have ill repaid, are apt to assail us with."

There was something in the manner with which she accompanied those words, which caused Casim r to appreciate their meaning. "Alas!" thought he; "she does me justice now, but it is too late!" He could not resist saying,

"Surely, madam, you cannot have experienced the poignancy of such a sentiment."

"Does the heart of my brother Wilhelm's devoted friend acquit me?"

And she bent over her plate, to conceal the emotion which overspread her countenance. He did not reply, but she heard him murmur inwardly those last words, with which she had dismissed him at the fatal mask at Princess Stolberg's—"It is too late!—too late!" At length, as if anxious to give a turn to conversation, which was becoming too painfully interesting,—

"I do not," said he, "see Conrade! My good old friend and comforter, Father Felix, evaded my questions concerning him: that he is not now in your service I am aware; his prejudices, no doubt, have separated you; but you can probably inform me of his destiny, for *you* would not lose sight of Conrade."

"Oh, Casimir!" said she, turning deadly pale, "do not name Conrade! —It is horrible!"

At this moment, Pandulfo, who occupied his usual seat on the left hand of Madame de Wolfsteïn, threw his arm

across the back of her chair, and pressed the shoulder of Vallensteïn, who started, and, looking round, was soon aware of the meaning of this silent hint. The Lord of the feast had gradually relinquished all conversation; and, leaning his elbow on the table, fixed his eyes, in a deep and deadly scowl, on the Count and his wife; he had sate some time in this position, and Pandulfo knew not how to awaken the attention of his neighbours to this inauspicious omen. Louisa was terrified, Casimir distressed for her sake, and a dead silence prevailed round the table.

"What has happened?" cried Wolfsteïn fiercely. "Why gaze ye all upon each other? — Is it anything strange that an interesting youth and a gentle dame should whisper, and blush, and turn pale, and sigh, and utter their half-smothered exclamations, in the very face of her husband? Ye are novices, all of you! — It happens every day. But con-

versation languishes; I would see my guests merry! Come, since you are all dumb, I will tell you a tale to divert you."

To the consternation of all his hearers, he related the well-known story of the Seigneur Fayal; and he dwelt with sinister emphasis on that part of the tragic tale, where the exasperated spouse serves up, as the repast of his unhappy wife, the heart of her lover, Raoul de Coucy!

"I have heard this story," said he, "treated as a fiction.—What do you think of it, madam?"

"I believe it may be true, sir," replied Louisa.

"Well, whether De Fayal fed his wife, or not, with the heart of his rival, it is a tale of vengeance prettily imagined, and may serve as instruction to an injured husband. I, for my own part, am happy in my wife; but there are men who might use the Seigneur's receipt to advantage."

Pandulfo muttered within himself—"You must despatch a few of us, however, ere you practise such infernal cookery!"

"Count Casimir of Vallensteïn, I pledge you," said Wolfsteïn.

Corylo poured wine into two goblets, and presented one to Vallensteïn, whose exasperation at what had passed caused him to hesitate; but he heard the word "drink" faintly uttered by his fair neighbour, and he swallowed the draught.

"Here's to your noble father, Count—the Duke of Friedland, Sagan, Mecklenburgh, and Great Glogau, and late generalissimo of the forces of his imperial majesty."

"Did you say *late* generalissimo, Chevalier?—Has my father, then, relinquished his command?"

Something like hope and pleasure crossed his thoughts as he asked this question; he trusted the Duke, having seen the fallacy of his ambitious schemes,

had made a voluntary sacrifice of the power which tempted him.

"Your question is a critical one, Count; the answer involves much singular and important matter."

"Pardon me, Chevalier, I would only ask if my father has made a willing surrender of his command, or if it has again been required from him by his imperial master?—One word will satisfy me."

"I fear then, that Ferdinand has, by demanding the Duke's retirement, proved himself unworthy the services of so *faithful and disinterested* a friend. In short, Count, the crown of Bohemia is still in the stars, where old Fieramosca first found it, and, till the stars fall, it will never reach your father's head."

"Unmanly insult!" cried Vallensteïn, turning pale.

"Be patient," whispered Louisa, terrified at the thought that, besides his feebleness, he alone of all the company was unarmed.

"Do not agitate yourself, Count.—There is now in the castle a courier from Egra, and I would fain have communicated the contents of his despatches for your satisfaction, but I will not multiply *scenes*—I have had too many to please me already to-day. To-morrow, unless my mind alters, you shall be made acquainted with such passing events as are connected with your father's destiny."

The guests now all rose from table, and Pandulfo attempted to secure the privilege in which he had been hitherto indulged, of leading the lady of the castle to her apartments.

"Not to-day, sir!" said Wolfsteïn abruptly; and, seizing his wife's hand, he accompanied her to her chamber. He took a seat by her.

"What were you saying, madam, when the officious Pandulfo gave you that timely hint? It must needs have been something interesting!—Let me hear it; I like to have my sensibility

awakened." She hesitated. "Oh! you have forgotten, no doubt; but," said he, grasping her arm with his usual ferocity, "think a little, for you *shall* tell me!"

"It is a subject, Wolfsteïn, which, for your own sake, I would fain suppress. If the name of Conrade has nothing appalling to *your* ear, *I* may venture to pronounce it."

"Dexterously evaded!" said Wolfsteïn, turning pale; for, in truth, that name did occasionally produce a cold vibration on his nerves.

"It is no evasion, Wolfsteïn:—Vallensteïn was well acquainted with the worth, the zeal, and affection of my brother's faithful servant, and he inquired where I had disposed of him. It was an agitating question, and the interruption caused by your menacing looks, relieved me from the embarrassment of an answer."

It was a fortunate circumstance that

Conrade's name had occurred at that critical moment, since, of all the dark images which rose in succession before the mind's eye of Wolfsteïn, there was none which he was so earnest to dismiss. His nerves were not strung for the conflict as they had been; nor could he, as heretofore, look back with indifference, and forward with confident presumption; he was now neither clear and uniform in his purpose, nor resolved in his actions.

CHAPTER X.

"Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man."

The following day the Lord of Lornberg was much engaged in receiving and conversing with couriers, who came from various quarters, bringing intelligence; which, judging by the eagerness and agitation of Wolfsteïn's manner, was of no indifferent tenor. The hour of the feast was protracted, but when, at last, it was served, the Chevalier sought his wife, and led her to the banqueting hall; where the meal was concluded with more than usual silence and rapidity. Warned by the example of the preceding day, Count Casimir, although as the stranger guest the privilege was still awarded

him, of leading the lady of the castle to her place, and occupying the next seat, was very cautious of casting a glance, or uttering a word which might incur for the unhappy Madame de Wolfsteïn the fury of his host. He contented himself, therefore, with partaking only what her hand presented to him, and with perceiving she was anxious to tempt his wayward appetite, by selecting whatever was most delicate from the costly luxuries which covered the table. The meal being ended, Wolfsteïn commanded the absence of the attendants; and, turning to Vallensteïn, said,

" I partly engaged, Count Casimir, to impart to you the tenor of the despatches which have reached me from Egra, since which I have received others more conclusive than those of yesterday. Are you disposed to give them audience, or is your mood inclined to any other amusement?"

"You well know, Chevalier," replied

Casimir, his cheek flushing with emotion, "how long it is since I have heard tidings of my father!—I do most ardently desire to hear the despatches."

"Well, Count, the farther to testify my consideration for you, you shall not only be gratified immediately, but the dulcet voice of Baron Wilhelm's sister shall pour their contents on your ear."

He then took a letter from his bosom, which was handed to Madame de Wolfsteïn.

"Favour Count Casimir, my dear, by a perusal of that epistle. None of you," added he, looking round, "have heard Madame de Wolfsteïn read; her voice, musical as it is in the utterance of her own words, lends infinite force and pathos to those of others. Read, madam, and read audibly!"

She took the letter, surprised and embarrassed; and, as usual, apprehending that this apparent courtesy was but the veil of some malicious scheme. As she

prepared to obey, Captain Pandulfo, as though by accident, let fall the whole contents of his goblet over her, rose in great confusion, and, offering many apologies for his awkwardness, attempted to lead her from the room, that she might divest herself of her wine-dropping robes.

"Stay, Pandulfo," said Wolfsteïn calmly, "there is spirit enough in that liquid to secure the lady of the castle from suffering more than temporary inconvenience from your libâtion. It is a pity so ingenious a stratagem should fail—is it not, my friend Pandulfo?"

"What do you mean, Chevalier?"

"You need not ask that question. But, for the letter!—Will you indulge us, madam?"

"I entreat," said Casimir, "that Madame de Wolfsteïn will retire and remedy the effects of this accident. Perhaps you will trust the despatches to my own perusal, or will favour me by reading them yourself."

"No, sir, if they are not read by Madame de Wolfsteïn, they will not be read by any one; if she quits the room, they shall that moment be committed to the flames, and the intelligence they contain be buried in oblivion!"

"Quit the room, nevertheless, madam," whispered Pandulfo.

On the other hand, the dejected, agitated countenance of Casimir seemed to plead for the perusal of the manuscript, and, together with the dread of her husband's wrath, determined her. She unfolded the letter, and was glancing her eye over the first page, when Wolfsteïn cried,

"How, madam! is it not legible?—Must you spell it ere you begin?"

Thus urged, she commenced her task.

"Since our letters from Pilsen, you will easily calculate on the probability of that which I am now to communicate. You were aware that the whole extent of the Duke's prodigious schemes was

scanned by the eye of the Emperor, even before his majesty was prepared to avail himself of our intelligence."—Louisa's voice faltered; the eye of Casimir, fixed as marble, was riveted to her countenance.

"Read, madam!" said he; "read! I am prepared—I will not distress you—I can bear it."

"Read, madam!—Read audibly!" echoed Wolfsteïn.

"After the sentence of degradation had passed his majesty's council, and was known and published, the high spirit of this great man still maintained itself; he believed himself still surrounded by adherents inflexibly attached to his fortunes; and he still confided in the predominance of that star which promised him empire. Field Marshal Illo, and Generals Terski, Morvald, Predau, Lozy, and Hinnersam, and even Piccolomini, signed a paper, pledging themselves to stand by their great benefactor, even

unto death; but that same evening Piccolomini set off for Vienna, and, in the middle of the night, procured entrance to the palace, bearing with him the scheme of the Duke's horoscope, drawn up by the hand of that crafty old traitor Fieramosca, who has been the grand wheel in our machinery, together with innumerable proofs of the Duke's criminal designs. The flight of the deeply trusted Octavius Piccolomini, of Gallas, and of Aldringer, looked like a wavering in the march of destiny, which somewhat startled the stout-hearted Duke; nay, perhaps, although he affected to place no reliance on the faith and gratitude of men, he felt shocked by these desertions; but it was decreed, that he should prove to the utmost the truth of his own doctrines. He secretly quitted Pilsen, attended by me, and Butler, to whom you know he lately gave a regiment of dragoons; and, escorted by Terski's regiment, we came to Egra, of whose go-

vernor he felt as sure as if he had been his son; for, in fact, having raised him from the ranks, he was the father of his fortunes. Meanwhile, we were in possession of secret orders to seize the Duke's person; but, in spite of the almost general defection, he had still a few sturdy wights about him, whose stubborn spirits we knew how to appreciate; and they rendered it impracticable for us to fulfil this clause in our instructions. Assassination was then the only alternative, and on that we agreed!"

Again Louisa faltered, turned pale, and entreated to be spared the farther perusal of the paper. But Casimir, laying his icy fingers on her arm, exclaimed,

"I conjure you, I conjure you, madam! proceed. Any thing but ignorance!"

"The Count must learn his father's fate from your lips, madam, or not at all," said Wolfsteïn.

"To make short my eventful story,"

proceeded the narrator, "Gordon, the governor, invited his benefactor to a feast in the fortress soon after his arrival, and with him all his true adherents, Terski, Illo, Kinski, Winterfeldt, with Nieman, his old secretary."

The cheek of Louisa waxed paler and paler, her lips shook, her voice became less articulate; while Casimir hung on the words which he dreaded to hear, yet could not bear to lose; the inhuman Wolfsteïn sitting, meanwhile, as it were devouring the scene. The manly-hearted Pandulfo could no longer endure to witness this slow torture. He had writhed upon his seat, as if convulsed by some intolerable spasm; and now, rising suddenly, he seized the paper from the hand of Madame de Wolfsteïn.

"No," he cried, "it is no tale for a woman to read!—It is a tale of blood, and horror, and execrable perfidy! The Duke is dead, Count Casimir! He died

beneath the daggers of cowardly assassins!—But he died like himself!"

Madame de Wolfsteïn heard no more: the dreadful agitation she had endured in undergoing this most excruciating trial ended in insensibility: she fainted, and had not Casimir caught her, little able as he was to sustain even her weight, she would have fallen on the floor. Vallensteïn's head was light and confused; the tragical narrative to which he had just listened, had filled his fevered mind with vague uncertain images, and nothing around him seemed real; he knew only that some heavy affliction had befallen him, and that it was the form of Louisa of Marchfeldt he held in his arms, and which, in spite of his extreme feebleness, he grasped to his bosom with frantic tenacity. Pandulfo immediately comprehended his situation, and endeavoured, but in vain, to take Madame de Wolfsteïn from him: while the savage

contriver of this scene came deliberately towards them.

"What is this, sir?" said he: "Am I to see my wife suffer the embrace of my rival?"

"Your wife!" echoed Casimir, with a ghastly stare. "True!—Then I *must* relinquish her! But she should have been mine."

And he calmly resigned her. A fearful, corpse-like insensibility still hung upon her.

"She is dead!" said Casimir; "and so is my father, and Wilhelm, and Blanche!—They are all dead, and I would die too!"

As Wolfsteïn bore his unconscious wife from the banqueting hall, Vallensteïn pursued him.

"Living," cried he, "she was your wife!—Let her be mine when dead!—Let one tomb inclose us, like Blanche and Wilhelm, and then all will be well!"

"Pandulfo!" cried Wolfsteïn furi-

ously, "if you would not have me strike my dagger into your prisoner, let him not provoke me! We must talk farther of this. He must be meeker than I am, who bears it tamely. Return to the hall. I will seek assistance for this lady, and join you presently."

They returned to the table: Casimir took the seat he had before occupied, and sate with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the vacancy left by Louisa; while Pandulfo, in order to divert his attention, took up the paper which had fallen from his hand when Madame de Wolfsteïn fainted. This excited the observation of Vallensteïn, and he began asking several vague and wandering questions respecting the contents. Only a few of the officers had been invited to remain during the perusal of the despatches, which were written and signed by the treacherous favourite Devereux; and of these, some now began openly to express their disgust and indignation at

the inhuman manœuvre they had witnessed. As Wolfsteïn had apprised Pandulfo of his intention to return, the rest requested his advice, whether they should remain or separate.

"Stay!" said the captain. "Some altercation will probably take place between us; and, to whatever I may be provoked to act or speak, I would have witnesses."

"For my part," said one, "the wine has unsteadied my judgment; I shall be of little use to you."

"And I," said another, "would not be implicated in any of these broils: I have seen enough of the Chevalier's summary mode of proceeding: I wish not to experience it in my own person."

The number, therefore, of those who remained with Pandulfo and the half-conscious Vallensteïn, did not exceed three or four.

Meanwhile, the Chevalier, having roughly flung the still inanimate form of

his wife on her couch, he called on Barbara, who waited in the next apartment.

"Look to your lady! Call the monk —bid him bring his lancets! If she is alive, she must be bled."

"You have killed her!—You have killed her!" cried Barbara in a phrensy, as she looked on the apparently lifeless corse of her beloved lady. "You shall be broken on the wheel, you wicked monster!"—all his power and all his terrors vanishing from her thoughts, before the grief and indignation which seized her on beholding the supposed murderer of Louisa.

"Peace, thou noisy fool!" said Wolfstein, seizing and dashing her from the room. "Go, call the friar, I tell thee, and return on the instant!"

He did not, without alarm, contemplate the total stillness of Louisa's countenance, the paleness of the closed lids,

and the seemingly total cessation of her breath. Now he stood, with folded arms, regarding her—now he chafed her hands or earnestly felt her pulse—and sometimes he called upon her name. "She is dead!" he said sullenly. "Dead!—and I have done it!"

Then again he approached; and, having listened in vain a moment for her breath, giving way to his fury, he stamped, and shrieked in her ear,

"Louisa, open your eyes when I command you!"

At length, perceiving a silver vase full of scented water, he seized it, and poured the cold liquid over her face, when, with a sudden sob, she raised her head.—At that moment Father Felix and Barbara entered.

"Abandoned, unhappy man!" exclaimed the former, "what hast thou done?"

"Nothing!" replied Wolfstein, resuming his usual cold indifference of

manner; "I thought she was dead, yet it was all a trick. Look to her, Father; *I* have business elsewhere!"

And leaving her in the tender hands of those, whose whole of earthly hope was involved in her existence, and who harboured no care, entertained no prospect beyond it, he retraced his steps to the banqueting room, bearing with him a heart full of tumult and perturbation. He re-seated himself at table, and filling a goblet to the brim, drank it off.

"I am glad," said he, looking round him, "that some who were witnesses to the recent scene, whose eyes beheld my outrages, remain to judge between me and my guest. None of you will dispute that the cause of Madame de Wolfsteïn fainting was her *sympathy* (I think they call it) for that man: but, tender of a woman's weakness, I restrained my feelings, and, in spite of the corroboration such a circumstance lent to other proofs in my possession, I would have over-

looked it; but, in contempt of a husband's presence, my guest (you all beheld it), seized my wife in his arms, and even refused to yield her up, pouring over her I know not what farrago of amorous nonsense, till I tore her from his grasp. Are ye not all my witnesses?"

Each looked on the other, but no one spoke.

"I am not," said Wolfstein, "accustomed to refer my affairs to any man's arbitration; but I have been outraged before my people, before my friends, before those to whom *my* injuries in a manner belong. You, at least, my trusty faithful friend, Pandulfo, will not *you* speak? I ask only, if I have alleged what any man present can impugn?"

"As the question is directed to me, my Lord, I will not hesitate to answer faithfully," said Pandulfo. "The facts you have stated are correct to the letter; but, pardon me, the spirit is per-

verted: my steady services have purchased for me the right of speaking truth without scruple, and, since you invite it, I will avail myself of the privilege. Your guest was consigned to your care and your *hospitality* by his father: how the trust was executed, I am not, perhaps, called on to examine."

"If," cried Wolfsteïn, indignantly, "you would inculpate me on that ground, I fear not to meet the charge. I accepted the trust and would have fulfilled it; but that Vallensteïn, instead of submitting to remain with me a prisoner at large, threatened to use every means allowed him of escape, and even treated me, within my own towers, with an insolent defiance which justified me in the act of abridging his freedom."

"You have gone nigh, Chevalier, to abridge his life; but permit me, without interruption, to trace *my* view of the scene which has this day occurred, and then call any umpire you please, provided he

wears the form and bears the heart of man. You have for two days, at the end of many dark and lingering months, conceded to your prisoner the light and the breath of Heaven, and you invited him to the courtesies of your table, and on what did you feed him there? On poison! or rather you distilled it on him slowly, drop by drop, till his mind gave way under the infliction, and you compelled your delicate wife to a task so revolting, as not a man amongst us but would have shrunk and shuddered to perform. Count Casimir *did* seize the inanimate form of Madame de Wolfsteïn and strain it to his bosom; we cannot deny it; we all witnessed the action; but he had not the guidance of reason, he acted under the impulse of delirium produced by your tortures: he is now at liberty on his own parole, seconded by mine, and when he returns to his dungeon, I go likewise."

Wolfsteïn sate, his elbow on the table, and his hand shading his twisted brows,

while he ground his teeth in silence. There was no man present, except Pandulfo and his unconscious prisoner, who continued sunk in feverish stupor, that did not tremble to calculate the result of this hardy speech, but, to the surprise of all, Wolfsteïn struggled with his violent emotion till he smothered it.

"And *you*, Pandulfo," said he, rising, "you, in whose hands I have deposited my life—on whose faith my safety reposes—in whose attachment only I am strong: is it you, who set the example of insubordination? Is it you, who threaten your friend and your chief before the eyes of your comrades? Is it you, who would procure that by menace, which you can win by request? Fie, Pandulfo! I looked for other at your hands."

Pandulfo rose likewise, and likewise relaxed the stern expression of his brow.

"I have been tempted far, my Lord; but in truth the sufferings of that noble

youth have acted strongly on my feelings."

"Be it all forgotten then," said the Chevalier; "let him be led to his apartment, and consigned to the care of Friar Felix, and we will drown this night's unkindness in a goblet of sparkling Tuscan."

Pandulfo conducted Casimir to his chamber; and, aware that Wolfsteïn's mood was unusually conciliatory, a temper for which he could in some measure account, he returned, with the intention of obtaining over the festive bowl some promise, as to the future destiny of Vallensteïn; since there existed no longer any pretence for holding him in captivity.

Wolfsteïn knew the infinite importance of the trust Pandulfo, as commandant of Lörnberg, held in his hands, and the strength and integrity of him who held it, but he hated him; and as he saw him quit the room with Casimir, his aversion

made a violent and sudden attack on his considerations of interest, which were overthrown in the contest.

"Loscho," said he, drawing one of the officers towards the croisée, through which they leaned as if to enjoy the balm of the evening; "am I deceived, or did I read in your ingenuous countenance a horror of the mutinous, factious spirit our commandant evinces? Methinks, I have seen a movement in your eye which has more than once indicated your feelings on that subject."

Loscho was taken by surprise.—"No doubt, my Lord, Pandulfo was very intemperate."

"It is true," pursued Wolfsteïn, "that he has talents for command; that he is a skilful engineer, and——but what signify his merits if he knows not how to obey; if he is the first to teach those under him the lesson of mutiny; if, in short, he looks on me with personal disaffection. I have pondered the matter, and, my

good Loscho, I have marked thee diligently: thou hast a peculiar zeal for my service, and wert *thou* where Pandulfo is, we should have done with these cavils:—but no more, my excellent Loscho. Here he comes! Keep yourself sober," he whispered: "I must drink."

They returned to the table. When the wine had for a short time circulated,

"I have been thinking, Chevalier," said Pandulfo, "that now the Duke of Friedland is no more, your charge of his son has expired with him. It is not probably your intention to detain the young Count much longer?"

"Certainly not; I have no object in his detention; yet as his health has declined within these walls, I would fain see it restored ere he quits them,—the Friar you know is another Galen."

The commandant felt satisfied, and did not press the subject.

"I am happy, my gallant friends," said Wolfsteïn, "in the thought that I shall ere long be in possession of means worthily to reward your services. The enormous spoil of that Leviathan, who has lately perished beneath the weight of his own ambition, will now be divided among those who assisted in his ruin, in proportion to the part each took in that prodigious event. Mine was a leading one: my power to supply the Duke both with men and intelligence compelled him to trust me, to admit me into the very centre of his intriguing breast. Fieramosca, Devereux, and myself, were the grand instruments of his destruction."

He now proceeded to expatiate on the boundless possessions of the fallen general, and the share thereof which would probably be his allotment; till the avarice of his mercenary companions began to inflame, and as the wine operated

on their spirits, they became profuse in declarations of attachment and fidelity to a chief, who could so nobly remunerate their love. For a while Pandulfo had very dexterously evaded the subject in discussion; for he abhorred treachery, though his situation had obliged him to witness and connive at much, but it was with a revolting spirit. Wolfsteïn had pressed the goblet upon him with such perseverance, that his discretion, at length, began' to waver; and the wily chief, watching his moment, let fall some expressions, on which he knew his now unguarded commandant would instantly seize. A short but sharp parley passed between them, Pandulfo's part in which proved sufficiently that his reason was reeling; but Wolfsteïn made a most pathetic appeal to the remainder of the company, "Whether it was fitting for a chief to sit tamely, listening to the repeated and aggravated contumelies of his

own officer; whether they would refuse their consent to his avenging himself by degrading the offender from an office he held under his appointment and by his sufferance; or, whether they deemed it meet he should submit himself, day by day, to be thus braved to his face?"

Loscho, who had scrupulously attended to the caution he had received, and who was the only sober man present, cried out,

"The man who can sit to see his chief insulted is a traitor!"

And was immediately echoed by every other voice. Pandulfo's situation was critical, for every man's hand was on the guard of his sword; but Wolfstein and Loscho appeased them.

"Look," whispered the former, "we can secure him without difficulty:—he is defeated already, and we have neither strength nor sense to contend with. Go, good Loscho, summon Scharaffa, and bid

him bring Vespo and Scorezzo—make no noise, and speak only to Scharaffa. I like to transact business quietly."

The commandant elect soon returned with his myrmidons.

"Scharaffa," said Wolfsteïn, winking as he spoke, "Captain Pandulfo is, as you may see, a little unsettled by this evening's libation—he cannot walk to his apartment. Do him the courtesy to convey him thither."

Scharaffa looked earnestly at his master; he did not half like the commission with which that wink charged him, for he knew that the times were critical, and that the step was hazardous; but Wolfsteïn, now inflamed by intoxication, said, stamping as he spoke,

"What is this? Thou hideous son of darkness, what dost thou glare at? Take him away, I say, and let him sleep himself sober in the vaulted room! Turn him in and bar the door on him, and thou shalt receive farther orders in the morning."

Obedience was the only alternative, and Scharaffa and his assistants carried off the helpless Pandulfo. The remainder of the guests retired to their several chambers; and Wolfsteïn, with Loscho, went round the castle, saw the guard relieved, explained that the commandant had drank too deep to attend that night to his duty, and then held a conference of some length, in which they exchanged congratulations on the ease with which their manœuvre had been effected; and Loscho went to his repose, with a promise of being invested the following morning in the important post which the disgrace of Pandulfo had rendered vacant.

Father Felix had passed the night in watching by the bed-side of one or other of his patients, and wandering between their different apartments. Madame de Wolfsteïn, although feverish and restless, was not now in a state to alarm his apprehensions. Once recovered from her long and death-resembling trance, she

had no relapse, and he feared not but the methods he adopted for her restoration would prove effectual. It was otherwise with Casimir; the long and cruel confinement he had undergone, assisted by the harassing disquietude of his mind, had undermined his strength, and a slow hectic was consuming his once athletic frame. Every new shock, therefore, made a dangerous inroad, and Father Felix feared that death had already marked him for his prey. His union with Louisa in the tomb had taken an exclusive and powerful possession of his thoughts; and, in his delirium during the night, his notion of her death, and the anxious anticipation of his own, were the only ideas which remained distinct from among the events of the preceding day.

CHAPTER XI.

" That is wormwood!"

Hamlet.

Wolfsteïn, in the pride and courage of intoxication, was not a little elated by the revolution he had effected in the government of his garrison, and retired to his chamber highly applauding himself; but with the first dawn of morning, and the first dawn of reflection, the whole danger of this rash manœuvre pressed upon his thoughts. For a moment he debated with himself, whether he might not better treat the whole transaction as a drunken frolic, liberate and conciliate Pandulfo, and compound as he might with Loscho, for his disappointment; but pride and personal dislike combated this prudent counsel.

" No," said he, " the deed is done;—

and, come what come may, I will not sit in my own castle, braved and cowed by one of my own creatures, and sneered at by my officers for my imbecility. Let Pandulfo's boasted talents, and his untameable audacity, set him free from my fetters,—this hand of mine shall never be so weak. Loscho is a fool!—But what of that? I can mould *him* to my will, and stiffer clay I never encountered than that of Pandulfo."

While he thus ruminated, Scharaffa entered his apartment.

"I come, sir," said he, "to ask your pleasure concerning your late commandant;" and he held in his hand the key of the vaulted chamber.—"Shall I let him forth before his men get tidings of what happened last night?"

"What! would you have me manage, and study, and compromise with my slaves? I awoke this morning under the illusion that I was lord of this castle, and of all, breathing or inanimate, that it

contains. It was a dream, perhaps,—and, if so, *who* is lord of Lornberg?"

"Even yourself, my noble Chevalier: but if your servant may speak his thoughts, as heretofore you have permitted, he would suggest that even the mightiest among the earth's mighty have ever found policy an excellent second to their will."

"I tell thee what, Scharaffa," and he held his head with both hands, "I am sick of scheming! My whole life has been a plot; my brain is entangled in cobwebs of its own weaving, and if I have not yet earned the despotic and absolute use of my will—But I will try it at least.—I hate Pandulfo, and he shall feel I hate him."

"And, like a faithful servant, I hate him too," said Scharaffa, showing, as he grinned ferociously, his discoloured fangs.—"Do you think I would stand between him and your aversion? No.—But you are not secure, my lord, you are not se-

cure! Wait till your hands are strengthened."

"How, Scharaffa! Are there traitors in the citadel?"

"Or I am greatly mistaken.—Wait, my lord, till some of those bands you lent the duke return, when you can, gradually, and, as it were, man by man, exchange your present garrison. Wait till you have received your proportion of the duke's spoils—in short, wait the auspicious moment;—you cannot strike now."

At that moment some one tapped at the door of the ante-room, and Scharaffa, having looked out, returned, smiling hideously.

"It is," said he, with an ironical grimace, "your new commandant, my lord."

"Come in, Loscho! What brings you here?"

Pale, and trembling with a mixture of terror and wrath, he entered.

"My lord, the whole garrison is in a

state of tumult and mutiny: I have been insulted, hooted, threatened! Pandulfo has corrupted them to a man,—and as for me"——

"As for *you*, you had better stop to take breath, sir! It is marvellous to me, that coolness and intrepidity such as yours should have failed in restoring order amongst them!—Stay here, sir, lest that creamy cheek and wandering eye should confirm the mischief; a rebel's strength is in his chief's weakness. Stay with Scharaffa."

So saying, he seized his sabre, and placing his pistol in his belt, he stalked down into the castle court, where his tumultuous soldiery were assembled in groups, every man having left the ramparts, in short, not a single post being kept.

As Wolfsteïn deliberately took his way to the scene of mutiny, he digested the counsels of the crafty Scharaffa; he perceived that his situation required address

and patience, and that he need only submit to procrastinate his revenge to a fitter hour.

"I have yielded more than this," thought he, "for the accomplishment of slighter purposes; it is but weakness to hesitate. Is not dissimulation my forte, and shall I now desert it, with the light-headed impetuosity of a boy?—How now, comrades!" said he, "how now!"

And he stood in the midst of them, looking as though it was his right to be feared.

"Why, noble Chevalier," said they, "it is no great matter, only we would fain know what is become of our brave Captain Pandulfo, and whether we are to do the bidding of that craven, Loscho!"

"Is that all?—Methinks Captain Pandulfo might have held you in better training. Your mode of asking a question is not after the order of strict discipline."

Jealous for the renown of their beloved captain, they hastened to assure him that

he never should have cause to doubt their subordination or their courage, while he gave them a leader worthy of them.— "But what, my lord," said one of them, "could we do against a foe, under a captain who turns pale if one of his own soldiers looks steadily at him?"

Wolfsteïn now, by a few calm inquiries, discovered that Loscho had exhibited amongst them, in the course of a few minutes, the two prime qualities of an insufficient leader,—rashness and cowardice. The admirable composure of Wolfsteïn's conduct immediately reminded them they stood in the presence of a master.

"Now, my men," said he, "let us understand each other.—You have unhappily injured both yourselves and your commander in my opinion by this rebellious tumult, for I did believe my castle garrisoned by troops of as steady discipline as any fortress in Europe; and for Pandulfo, I held him, as a soldier, so

stern in his allegiance, that had I demanded his head at your hands, he would himself have commanded the execution of my order—but let that pass. I am not the first who has found himself deceived in the steadiness of those he trusted!—I thought ye heroes, but ye are common men; and the blame lies, not in your inferiority, but in my error."

"Indeed, my lord," said one of them, "Pandulfo will be the first to rebuke and punish our rashness! We only prefer a captain that *we* fear, to one who fears us."

"Well, gentlemen, I will explain to you your leader's absence, that you may learn, on the next emergency, to think before you act. I held, yesterday, a revel in the castle, to celebrate some changes in the state, which auspiciously affect my fortunes, and will consequently affect yours, if ye deserve my love;—nay, this very day it was in my mind to have given largess to my garrison, that they likewise might keep feast and holiday. Our hearts

were light, and in the hour of carousal we forgot the caution which might have become men who had the conduct of others. —We drank too deep;—the strength and intellect of Pandulfo were both overwhelmed in the torrent:—words of defiance and wild bravado passed amongst us,—their import or their aim I know not now. The glimmering of reason that yet remained to me suggested how unmeet it was your captain should hazard the esteem in which you hold him, by encountering your sight, as I beheld him, and I had him borne where such exposure could not await him. But for your tumult, he should have come forth to you this morning, his night's defeat unknown."

"But Loscho, my lord, usurped his command, and was bragging amongst us like a Hector!"

"Psha! he has not slept off his wine! He dreamed of promotion, peradventure, and would fain dream on."

The soldiers now all waved their caps, crying, "Long live our noble Chevalier!" and the officers who had stood aloof, uncertain how to act, some of them fearing the men, some Wolfsteïn, and most of them attached in their hearts to the commandant, now assembled round him.

"I go," said the Chevalier, "to send your captain to you. For your sakes I have stretched condescension to its limits. Tempt me thus no more!"

And he left the court amidst the cheers and acclamations of the troops. The Lord of Lornberg, having moulded these ductile spirits to more favourable temper, returned to his apartment, where he found Loscho and Scharaffa.

"My lord," said the latter, "I have been talking with Signior Loscho, and have found the cause of this tumult: the jokes which passed last night over the goblet went for current in his brain, and took possession there. This morning he verily did believe himself the captain of

your garrison, and so began to exercise his rule, waiting no warrant."

"Is it possible, Loscho?" said Wolfstein contemptuously: "I have seen many a strong man's wit taken captive by the contents of a goblet; but an hour's subjection has redeemed it. Thou art a strange fellow, to work the fumes of yesterday's revel into figures, and swear by their reality. Banish thy conceits, or intoxication will slide into insanity. I did not deem thee a wight of so infirm a brain."

Poor Loscho was astonished; he began to believe his faculties were really betraying him, and that, instead of being the only sober individual at the revel, he must have been deeper drowned in wine than any of his comrades. One fact, however, he was now able to distinguish clearly, his own total unfitness for the command in which he had been so eager to see himself invested, and, on the whole, he rejoiced it was a dream;

though the cold scorn with which his lately affectionate chief surveyed him was somewhat galling, and the broader derision of the hideous satellite intolerable.

"You may retire, friend Loscho," said Wolfsteïn, "and be happy to feel yourself snug in a station, where your abilities will not be placed in too strong a light. You are fortunate, sir," added he, somewhat sternly, "that your waking dream has not ended in a tumble down a precipice."

Loscho bowed humbly, and very willingly accepted permission to withdraw.

"Now comes my toughest and least digestible task: I must perforce take your counsel, Scharaffa; so follow me."

There was such innate malice in this grim being, that even in beholding his master foiled and humbled, there was enjoyment. Wolfsteïn himself had a sort of awe of him; the diabolical force and subtlety of talents so often and infallibly

exerted for his use, made this human monster necessary to his fortunes. The coolness and deliberation of Scharaffa's temper was far superior to his own; but, as in all *such* alliances, between *such* spirits, it was interest solely which kept them united, and there were moments when Wolfsteïn looked on the incomparable ugliness of his useful domestic with a loathing antipathy, which would almost, in spite of every restraining effort, force its way into his countenance. But Scharaffa desired only that his master should fear him, and depend on him; knowing well that no one could love him, nor any eye, not inured by long practice, dwell on his aspect without disgust and abhorrence. Morning was somewhat advanced, when, provided with a torch, they wound through the long, damp, narrow passages which led to the subterranean abode, called the vaulted chamber. Having removed the ponderous bars which secured the door, Wolfsteïn

took the torch from Scharaffa, and entered, Pandulfo, who was, with folded arms, pacing the contracted limits of his dark apartment, now stopped, and looked in the face of his visitor as steadily as the sudden transition from obscurity to light would admit.

"Why, Pandulfo," said Wolfstein, "of all the preposterous tricks that ever wine inspired, our having provided you with such a lodging is the most whimsical. The whole transaction had escaped me; and here, for aught I know, you might have lain some time longer, so effectually had my libations washed away the memory of the deeds they caused. But, come," said he, shuddering, "this is no place to parley in. I trust, my dear fellow, the damp has not injuriously affected you; in that case I should never forgive myself. Come, and I will tell you a few more excellent results of last night's frolic, that shall make you burst with laughter. In consequence of your

non-appearance, that fool, Loscho, believed himself invested in your office, and began to play the commandant in a mode so pompous and fantastical, as had well nigh astonished your men into mutiny. But come forth, and I will tell you the whole story."

"Hold, sir!" said the sturdy Pandulfo; "though the events of yesterday may have filtered through your brain, they have rested in mine. I remember that I have been insulted and degraded —I recollect the reason, too, as clearly as the fact, nor will I forget till the injury is repaired."

"Surely, Pandulfo, you are not awake, thus to resent, with unforgiving tenacity, an offence committed by men who knew not how they acted! I rejoice, indeed, that the records of last night are wiped from the tablet of *my* memory, if their existence would have thus embittered my humour; for, no doubt, I might have traced a catalogue of affronts thereon,

almost as flagrant and substantial as those you hold so valuable. Well, there is some excuse, however, for this sullen mood—thou hast had a cold bed and a hard pillow, and, no doubt, thy head aches unmercifully. Come, come, Pandulfo, you shall laugh at this—your men await you."

"You had better keep me safe where you have me, Chevalier; for if I go forth among my men, I will relate at full before them all the events of yesterday. I will tell them I am not fit to command them. Such troops deserve a leader whose honour has received no stain. I will resign the moment I am at liberty, and, no longer holding your commission, we may decide our quarrel as soldiers use to do."

As he spoke, Scharaffa appeared with Father Felix.

"What brings you here, Father?" asked Pandulfo in a softened tone.

"I come to bend thy stubborn spirit,"

my son; to exhort thee not to abandon thy post, or desert the troops thou hast trained, and to conjure thee to come forth in peace with the lord of the castle."

The eyes of Felix seldom conveyed a meaning beyond or at variance with his words; but now there was something in his look that gave irresistible effect to his admonition. Pandulfo cast a glance at Wolfsteïn, and hesitated.

"How is the Count, holy father?" said he.

"He is ill, my son, and his mind still wanders."

"Well," asked the Chevalier, sullenly, "are we to swell this folly into a quarrel, or will you take my apology, Captain Pandulfo? Now, friar, which of the two is the better Christian?"

"Be reconciled, my son," said Felix emphatically, and he added, in a whisper, "for the sake of many!"

Pandulfo, now, coldly, but without far-

ther delay, received and accepted the apology which had been so repeatedly offered; and Wolfsteïn became convinced, to his astonishment, of the irresistible influence possessed by the confessor over the mind of his otherwise sturdy and inflexible captain. Scharaffa, the moment he perceived the humour of the commandant, well knowing that his non-appearance, or his going forth unappeased amongst his men, would be equally productive of general disorder and mutiny, had flown to the friar; and told him that his good offices were requisite to extinguish a flame, which, without check, would blaze to the destruction of all within its precincts; for Scharaffa had by this time discovered that the meek ecclesiastic possessed a spell powerful enough to counteract their best-laid schemes: he resolved, therefore, in the present emergency, to make it useful. The party now proceeded into the re-

gions of daylight. Pandulfo changed his dress, and consented to join his men, accompanied by Wolfsteïn: discontent and suspicion had again crept amongst them, owing to the delay which followed the Chevalier's promise; but now that they beheld their beloved captain and the lord of the castle approach in such amicable guise, they signified their joy by very audible demonstrations.

"Your attachment, soldiers," said the former, "is grateful to my feelings; but I condemn your mode of evincing it. You do little credit to the discipline I have laboured to establish: these sudden and unbidden impulses are hostile to every rule of military tactics—we must reform them."

The rebuke took instantaneous effect; from a tumultuous crowd they fell into regular order, and the utmost silence and precision prevailed. Wolfsteïn called them generous, fine-spirited fellows, and

audibly commended and excused them; publishing his intention to distribute the largess he had previously hinted at.

"Pardon me, my lord, no largess to-day, nor for many days to come. Our discipline is relaxed already; when it is re-established, I will remind your lordship of your promised bounty."

"You are too stern, too severe, Captain Pandulfo!"

A serjeant, who acted as spokesman, now came forward, and observed respectfully, that the soldiers were satisfied their commandant was in the right; and that until they were assured of his approbation and acquiescence, however long withheld, no bounty would be acceptable. In short, Wolfstein in a very few hours became instructed in the humiliating and appalling lesson, that there were greater men than he within his own ramparts. Determined to go quite through his task of conciliation, he signified his intention of visiting the bed-

side of his guest, accompanied by Felix and Pandulfo; and, observing that the former would fain have diverted him from the performance of this courtesy, and heard him announce it with uneasiness, he resolved the more strenuously upon it. They found Casimir rambling wildly; he believed that Princess Stolberg stood beside him, and was incessantly apostrophising her.

"No, Augusta," said he, "it is impossible! I had but one heart, and Wilhelm's sister, she had that long ago, and never restored it! Here," said he, laying his hand on his bosom, "if you search you will be convinced—there is a vacuum, is there not? It is empty; yet there is a pulse—beat, beat! I would it might be still! If that pulse would be quiet, there would be an end of the matter,—I should go to sleep."

Pandulfo and the friar were equally disturbed at the tenor of these wanderings.

"Methinks," said the latter, "the fewer forms that cross his sight the better; a variety of objects only assist in confusing his already bewildered brain."

Pandulfo understood his meaning, and would have quitted the apartment, but that Wolfsteïn turned a deaf ear to the suggestion; and, affecting to be wholly absorbed in sympathy for his unhappy guest, approached him closely, and even took his burning hand, and leaned over him.

"I know it," said Casimir, looking earnestly at him; "I will not upbraid you, Wolfsteïn—you have done what you could: I forgive you the marriage—that is past! You have killed us both, that we may be wedded in the grave: it was an excellent thought! Augusta! sister of Mercy! you will come and strew flowers, and sing the requiem;—you will do it best!"

"It seems strange," said Wolfsteïn, "that his thoughts should be so inces-

santly engrossed by Madame de Wolfstein. You will tell me this is delirium; yet what is the effect of delirium, but to discharge fearlessly, and without method, the whole burthen of the mind; like the miser, who, intoxicated or insane, will pour forth at random his hoarded treasures? The man may be mad; but the coin is nevertheless genuine."

"And yet," said Pandulfo, "a delirious man will reverse, in the height of his wanderings, his antipathies and attachments."

"Do you believe it is thus in the present case?" asked the Chevalier, with a suppressed sneer.

"For my part," was the answer, "I cannot lay much stress upon the matter; nor have I ever heard that words uttered in the crisis of a fever were laid to heart and weighed as oracles."

"Become a husband, Pandulfo, and listen to such words as I have listened

to, similarly directed, and *then* tell me what stress you lay on the matter."

"Peace!" said the friar; "he is now quiet!" and he accompanied them to the door; but ere he returned into the apartment, he paused, and said to Wolfsteïn, "You are disturbed by the ravings of that unhappy youth; but be pacified, I conjure you! His heart is broken, and his frame is wasting, and that offending voice will soon be heard no more! But even were it not thus, should health ever re-visit him, should he awaken to the consciousness that his secret passion is betrayed, he will fly its object to the end of the world! No, fear not, Lord of Lornberg! for all the transitory enjoyments of earth he will not forfeit his hopes of a union with the sister of Wilhelm in heaven, and there"—he paused; but he would fain have said, "There *thou* wilt not stand between them."

Wolfsteïn was in a frame of mind he had never before endured; embittered,

dejected, humbled. He had formerly been content to be hated, since he was at the same time feared; but now there was a species of resistance and contradiction, either tacit or avowed, which, hard as it was to brook, he knew at present of no alternative. He began to think, that life, without a single being on whose affection he could reckon was cold and comfortless, and to envy the meanest of his fellow-creatures, if indeed he could call himself man's fellow, whom somebody loved. He took his way towards Madame de Wolfsteïn's apartment—

"I will go to my wife," thought he; "I will speak gently to her—her affections *were* mine—I can easily win them back."

He had not hazarded an inquiry after her, and knew not, therefore, whether she still slept: he opened the door of the ante-room cautiously, lest he should awake her abruptly; a faint, but earnest, voice exclaimed,

"Oh, father! what tidings? Say, is he calmer? What of the unhappy Casimir?"

"Distraction!" cried Wolfsteïn, stamping madly, "I am pursued by furies! The very angels turn fiends to torment me!"

Barbara, who had advanced to meet him, imagining, like her lady, that it was Father Felix, on perceiving her error, uttered a piercing shriek, so powerfully had the events of the preceding evening impressed her mind with terror and disgust. In short, tokens of antipathy, silent or proclaimed, assailed him on all sides: he could have wept as he turned gloomily from the apartment, muttering to himself, "No! this is not the moment!"

Scharaffa met him in the corridor—"I have been seeking you with these despatches; I wish they may prove welcome."

Wolfsteïn snatched them from him—

"I hardly care," he cried, "what they contain!"

"So much the better," said Scharaffa, with a sinister scowl; "for I doubt their contents."

"Ay?" said his master: "Who bore them?"

"Ubaldo."

Wolfsteïn tore open the packet, as, followed by his satellite, he crossed the castle to his own apartment. It was from Devereux, who acquainted the Chevalier in brief, yet formal, terms, that he regretted it was not in his power to ratify certain conditions to which he had pledged himself; that Gallas and Piccolomini had already, by an effectual application of bribery and menace, secured the troops which Wolfsteïn had lent for a subsidy to the late generalissimo:— "This is unfortunate, no doubt," added the writer; "but your only alternative is to be passive, and to draw your affairs

into a narrower focus; for, with respect to sharing the confiscated possessions of the Duke, your name has not occurred amongst the individuals thought worthy of reward: the two generals above mentioned, together with Aldringer and Leslie, have already, with the Emperor's sanction, divided the spoil; while Gordon is nobly remunerated by Terski's forfeited estates. I do not name the pittance allotted as the acknowledgement of my services, which, as they were both political and personal, is barely adequate; but, sincerely, I think complaint on your part will be imprudent, as certainly it will be unavailing. Our joint affairs being brought, as it were, to a crisis, I will not needlessly multiply despatches, especially as I am now much employed and trusted, and my time is, consequently, almost wholly engrossed. So wishing you repose in your Dalmatian territory, farewell, dear Chevalier."

Scharaffa stood gazing on his master with a ghastly stare.

"Well!" said he, at length, "what admirable villany! Ay, he does it easily, with the hand of a master! That boy Devereux! Who would have foreseen it? What must be done?"

"Oh!" said Wolfsteïn, "should the worst happen, we can blow up the castle, and finish our pantomime at the bottom of the Adriatic!"

CHAPTER XII.

> "Of chance or change, oh! let not man complain,
> Else, shall he never, never cease to wail!"
>
> *Beattie.*

We must now, for a short season, quit the shores of the Adriatic for the banks of the Danube; and as we return to the Austrian court, the reflection is pressed hard upon us how many a melancholy change a few years, nay, a few months of absence create in the haunts once peopled with forms dear to the heart or the fancy.—How many are gone or altered, or if *they* are still what they were, they are become otherwise to our fickle perceptions! But what avails it to sigh over time's ravages! *They will proceed*, and he who has courage to let the current pass, bear what it may along its surface,

is alone a fit inhabitant of this revolving planet, where all that has been, has passed; all that is, is passing; all that shall be, will pass! However mighty, exalted, beautiful, or beloved, neither pride nor might, nor what is stronger than all, affection, can counteract this eternal law—all must change! The very dust on which we trample once stood erect, and smiled and exulted, and reasoned, and took its heedless path over dust that had once been animate, as we do now.—Have these reflections their use? It is hard to decide—a sigh *must* follow them, and sighs are so plenty in our atmosphere, that it is scarcely wise to court them. She who decked the thorny crown of Ferdinand with the roses of love and friendship, the lovely, the mild, the dignified Mary Anne was no more, and every fibre in the heart of the Imperial widower was quivering to the stroke. He had contended with many things, and *she* had taught him patience; but the smile which

had ever cheered him was now extinct, the tender bosom on which his aching head securely rested was cold and unfeeling; no sorrow, no joy of his could touch it more! Where, in this deepest anguish, might he now listen for comfort, since the voice which had never failed him had ceased in everlasting silence? Still, as he looked towards the Heaven whither she was fled, something like the echo of those precious accents whispered, "Yet a little while," and those words became the soothers of his affliction. Little, indeed, can the mere votary of this world guess how some hearts have learned to cling to the reflection that all things pass! The lively, piquante, brilliant Princess of Stolberg, *she* was no more! Not, indeed, that the machine which bore that name had vanished from the earth, but the spirit was extinct, and the character which constituted her identity gone. Her mind drooped, and her health languished;—she had watched the decline

of her august mistress, beheld its termination, and wept over that bier where she would fain have laid her own head. Lindau, once the gay butterfly of the Austrian court, had felt the blighting influence of the season, and he, too, looked back with disgust and scorn to the toys and rattles of his youth. Just at the period when the real designs of the elder Vallensteïn became manifest to his army, and when the officers found themselves compelled to choose their master, between him and the Emperor, the Margrave, whose allegiance the Duke had only attempted cautiously, endeavouring to attach him by acts of favour and demonstrations of affection, received so critical an account of his only sister, the sweet Ulrica, that he abruptly demanded leave to absent himself, which the Duke of Friedland was not then in circumstances to refuse. Desmond, for whom Lindau had caused a strict and secret search to be made, was at length

discovered amongst a heap of slain, desperately, but, as it proved, not mortally wounded. Having obtained possession of his person, he concealed him, watched over his cure, and now took the opportunity of carrying him unsuspected and unknown to Vienna; and Conrade, whom we left to his fate, alone, unarmed on a wide plain infested by wolves, was likewise in the Margrave's train. His sabre, his pistols, and his torch had been taken from him, and his doom seemed irrevocably decided. As the equipage passed on without him, however, and the cries of his distracted lady and of Barbara, and the earnest remonstrances of Father Felix died on his ear, instead of breaking forth in curses and imprecations on his assassins, he mingled a prayer for his afflicted friends, with those supplications for his own eternal welfare, which he believed were the last he should ever articulate, when perceiving something bright on the ground, he approached it,

and found it to be one of his own pistols, which had been dropt in the struggle, the lock of which reflected the moon-beam. The moment before not a ray of hope existed in his breast, and he snatched up the pistol in an agony of thankfulness:—it had been discharged in the short and unequal conflict which had taken place between him and his persecutors, but his pouch was well stored with ammunition, and he lost no time in re-loading.

"Now," said he to himself, "I feel confident that Providence is with me! Whatever may be my fate, I shall not feed the wolves to-night!"

Yet his situation seemed worse than precarious; armed with a single pistol, and surrounded by beasts of prey, in danger, too, of deviating from the right track, and of choosing one which might betray him into the very coverts and retreats of the enemy.—But what of that? The moon-beam which lighted on the

lock of his pistol was a token from Heaven, a pledge which he doubted not would be redeemed—nor was he deceived. In the view of attaching himself to the fortunes of Count Vallensteïn, he made his way to the Duke of Friedland's camp; —there, however, he could learn no tidings of his lamented master's friend, and after wandering through the German States in fruitless search, he at length returned, unhappy and desponding, and willingly accepted the offers of Lindau, who honoured and cherished his unavailing zeal, and beheld him rather as a friend than a servant. It is needless to say, that an union of interest so decided failed not to awaken a sympathetic attachment between Desmond and Conrade; each incessantly mourned, and regretted the same object, yet they kept up a constant interchange of hopes, for neither would believe him irrecoverably lost, and they looked forward to going forth one day together and prosecuting a mutual search,

which should only terminate in death or success. In the meanwhile, both Lindau and Winterfeldt trembled for the chance of Desmond's falling into the hands of the Duke, and he had been, until he quitted the camp, kept in strict although friendly imprisonment.

Winterfeldt resolved on sharing the Duke's fate, and connecting himself irrevocably with his fortunes, nor could any remonstrance his friends could devise shake his resolution :—it was in standing between his master and the treacherous ungrateful Devereux that Winterfeldt fell, never to rise again; and the breathless corpse of the celebrated man, whose life he unavailingly defended, was soon stretched upon his.

Lindau arrived only to see his pale snow-drop render up a brief and fragile existence, and long as he had anticipated the event, it came at last coldly over his heart, and it was long ere he could lift his spirits from the earth where this sweet

gem was buried. The Emperor, afflicted himself, beheld the man who mourned as his brother, and showed peculiar consideration for Lindau: he spoke to him, on their first private conference, of Casimir of Vallensteïn.

"My Mary Anne," said he, "always predicted that the character of that youth would come forth spotless;—her judgment is now confirmed. What has he not endured, rather than swerve in his duty to his sovereign, or inculpate his father!"

The Empress had not only repeatedly on her death-bed recommended this unfortunate but noble youth to his protection, but had left a paper enforcing the request, and as the fulfilment of every wish she had ever uttered, or that he had even suspected she might have entertained, was now become in the eyes of Ferdinand a sacred and consoling obligation, he had taken every means he could devise for the discovery of Casimir's retreat, and he now

consulted eagerly on the subject with Lindau, who related the manner in which his father had obtained possession of him, and his subsequent mysterious disappearance. To some of those counsels Desmond was admitted, but nothing conclusive resulted. It was at length Princess Stolberg, whose attachment to Casimir was only equalled by her horror of Wolfsteïn, by whom the spot where he was actually concealed was guessed at, and the instant it crossed her thoughts, she imparted the idea to those who might avail themselves of the suggestion. Lindau had been obliged to Wolfsteïn, but, loth as he might be to heap suspicion on his benefactor, the narrative of Conrade had convinced him that no misconstruction could darken the true character of that son of Satan. Sanguine, therefore, in hope that their long anxieties approached a termination, and that at least they had found a certain clue which would lead them right, they determined to set forth together, and

in the disguise of pilgrims visit the castle of Lornberg, binding themselves by a solemn vow never to return until they had either ascertained that the object of their pursuit was not within its walls, or till they had delivered him from them. Towards the coast of Dalmatia, therefore, they bent their way, travelling as expeditiously as fleet steeds would carry them, until they arrived at a town of some importance about seven leagues from Wolfsteïn's castle;—here, taking every possible precaution, and having addressed themselves to the governor of the place, for it was fortified, they showed him the Emperor's order, that he should, on peril of the imperial displeasure, assist the three travellers with whatever furtherance or accommodation their affairs might demand, and, in short, to yield implicitly to their directions. The governor was not sorry to find that the credit of his oppressive and terrible neighbour was wavering, as some of the numerous bands in Wolfsteïn's dependance

would frequently harass his citizens, and carry off flocks and herds close to his walls;—thus highly sanctioned, therefore, he was very willing to aid the strangers to the utmost extent of his means, and posted a considerable body of troops, fully accoutred for a siege, within the jaws of a defile half way between —— and Lornberg, their captain having received instructions to march to the attack of Wolfsteïn's castle, if, within three days, no tidings arrived from the strangers, who, having thus provided against all foreseen contingencies, in mantle grey, with staff and scallop shell, set forward to finish their journey on foot, in high anticipation of success. We will wish them God speed, and return to the inhabitants of the spot whither they are bent.

From the hour when the letter of Devereux had completely opened the eyes of Wolfsteïn to a truth, which, however immutably fixed in the bosom of every calm and philosophic observer of man and

his ways, had been, with him, hitherto either unknown or despised, that there is no allegiance among the wicked,—a strange, frozen composure seemed to take possession of his mind; all his unsettled thoughts, his busy, anxious ruminations, reposed coldly together, like the waves of the lake, when the frosty breath of winter has blown over it. He became unusually silent, but the keen observant penetration he had been accustomed to exercise during his intervals of taciturnity were not now to be remarked; in short, it seemed as though he had yielded himself up to indifference, and was resolved to let his fate find him unarmed and unprovided, and dispose of him even as it might. Scharaffa eyed him intently and incessantly, with all the acuteness of suspicion; but he was baffled, and could not fathom the thoughts of his master. Sometimes he inclined to the belief that the overwrought mind had really given way, and that the sudden disappointment of so many and

intricate schemes had crushed it into imbecility; at others, he could not divest himself of the notion that something was still working beneath the outward silence and inaction; yet was he condemned to waver between these opposite opinions, since he could discover nothing of a conclusive nature in the words, looks, or actions of Wolfstein. Amongst the numerous intrigues in which the Lord of Lornberg was implicated, was a clandestine correspondence with his Ottoman neighbours, whom he had occasionally supplied with information, for which he had repeatedly been rewarded by presents to a magnificent amount, and he had often within his towers an Italian Jew, who acted as the Turkish agent. While Wolfsteïn continued apparently absorbed in his unusual apathy, Scharaffa presented him with a packet, which, he said, had been left at the outward barbican by a shepherd, who had disappeared immediately. The Chevalier unfolded, and calmly perused

the paper, and Scharaffa meanwhile eagerly endeavoured to peruse his countenance: still it remained impenetrable; yet something like internal conviction struck Scharaffa that the letter was fraught with evil intelligence, and seeing Wolfsteïn read it to the end, fold it, and place it in his vest, deviating from his usual practice of confidence, he could maintain his wily and mute examination no longer.

"Have you no commands for me?" said he, sullenly.

"No.—What commands?" exclaimed Wolfsteïn, as if awaking from a reverie.

"That letter, my lord—methought your aspect wore somewhat of a perturbed cast during its perusal. Have you no commands?"

Wolfsteïn surveyed him with an air of cold surprise.—"*Did* I look perturbed? Sure you are mistaken.—But it is no matter, good Scharaffa; I have read the letter, and that suffices."

"The time has been, my lord, when you have found me necessary," said Scharaffa, becoming more hideously ghastly from smothered fury.

"True, my friend; but things change—thou knowest. A wide continent once covered the Atlantic—so they say, at least. What signifies what was in the time that has been? It is nothing to thee or me."

"The things *that are*, my lord, may signify to both of us! Like an ideot I have entangled myself with your fortunes, or rather have lent myself as the ladder by which you have ascended, and you are now worthily rewarding me—but beware, my lord! The mine is under your feet!"

"Not yet, not yet, Scharaffa," said Wolfstein, with a grim laugh; "but thou art unjust! Is it not the practice of a sound politician to kick down his ladder when he has used it? I have not kicked thee down!—And be merry, Scharaffa; thou shalt share thy master's fate."

" Methinks we are trifling, my lord. Either you are sunk in imbecility, and have no designs, or you use me villanously, and harbour schemes which you do not impart to me. In the latter case, you shall repent: —to the infernal deities *I* am already devoted, but to save myself, even now, I would not let go my revenge."

" Come to my heart, Scharaffa," cried Wolfsteïn; " we are worthy of each other!"

" What is in that letter, my lord?"

" Only a little news from the inquisition."

" What! Dominica?"

" Ay, Dominica, and other matters: —the old fellows have taken exception at that pretty pantomine I and my people performed, when we received the Grand Seignor's firman, in Mussulman's habits. Could you have believed, after all, that they would have been such fools as to have interfered with my pastimes?—I, who have served them so zealously!"

" It is but the old story, my lord—they

can do without us. From whom comes your intelligence?"

"That I know not; but take the letter, and have done with it! I have spent a stormy life enough—am I never to find rest?"

"If you can sleep, sir, on the brink of such a precipice. For mine own part," and he shuddered, "I would rather watch a little longer than awake from my slumber, to adorn the procession of an auto da fé."

"Thou art a screech-owl, Scharaffa; and I abhor thy hootings."

"This letter, sir, is from a friend, and written for your warning.—Will you neglect it?"

"I tell thee, I am weary and reckless! If thou hast any precaution, I give thee licence to use it—but plague not me!"

"Enough, my lord! Then sleep, if you please—my eyes will suffice us both! Do you object to my getting rid quietly of Pandulfo, since his presence, in case of

surprise from the inquisition, would b dangerous?"

"No, no, do as thou wilt—only leave me, Scharaffa!"

And thus the conference ended.

It now appeared as if Wolfsteïn's whole pleasure consisted in visiting alternately the apartments of Casimir and Louisa:—the former, although his fever was greatly abated, under the vigilant tenderness of Felix, was yet subject to temporary deliriums, and when they possessed him, the same unvarying idea held its place in his thoughts,—Louisa dead already, and himself eagerly anticipating the moment which should unite them in one dark and narrow home!—The sight of Wolfsteïn seldom failed to produce this effect; but as he sat quietly by the bed of the sufferer, and in no way indicated resentment at these ravings, which, at the same time that they betrayed the force and intenseness of the predominant sentiment, exhibited the candour and

purity of an uncorrupted soul, Felix believed that his heart could not remain for ever untouched by such a contemplation, and took no pains to evade or discourage his visits. Once when Vallensteïn, as was his custom, earnestly appealed to him respecting his right to repose in the same tomb with Wilhelm's sister, grasping his hand, and repeatedly calling for his promise, Wolfsteïn rose, and to the utter consternation of the Friar, he breathed a solemn and terrible vow that one fate should await both.

" For," said he, after a pause, " she cannot die, Vallensteïn, till thou diest! Destiny has compelled thee to live without her, but ye must die together."

The confused intellect of Casimir forbade him to comprehend clearly the meaning of what he heard, but he took it as an assurance of future bliss, and pressed the hand of Wolfsteïn close to his bosom, while Felix said,

"In Heaven's name, what mean you, my Lord?"

"Time will unravel my meaning, Friar, and to time I refer you."

And he stalked from the apartment to that of his wife. Madame de Wolfsteïn, no longer confined to her couch, endeavoured to occupy her melancholy mind by works of ingenuity: her graver studies, with the sole exception of that from which a promise of such peace as this evil world knows not is derived, were become irksome and uninteresting; her eyes wandered in vain over the most admired passages of those authors who had once awakened her interest,—they had no consolation to offer her,—she had no longer either thought or feeling to give them. From her pencil she obtained occupation, if not amusement; she would spend hours in the use of it, and as, if there was a sympathetic correspondence between her musings and the delirium of Casimir, the subjects she chose were all of a lugubrious and funereal

tendency; she was never weary of sketching the tomb of Wilhelm and Blanche, the little chapel on the isle of willows, dedicated to their memory, or solemn processions of nuns and friars, following to the grave some flower-decked bier. Except when prostrate before the crucifix in the privacy of her oriel chamber, or in communication with the holy Felix, she exhibited no emotion; the same calm, apathetic indifference seemed to absorb her feelings which had taken possession of those of Wolfstein, and evinced itself in nothing more strikingly than in the still composure with which she received his now frequent visits:—he would sit, even by the hour, watching her work, which she would pursue with an untrembling hand; —sometimes he would say, in a soft tone,

"Lay down that pencil, Louisa, and put that hand in mine."

She would obey, as if mechanically, but his pressure received no answer, and he would almost ask himself if the soft

fingers he held were indeed indued with life and feeling. Sometimes he harboured a faint, vague hope that some look, or smile, or word, or act of tenderness would proceed from the pale yet beautiful form by his side—but he waited in vain; yet he often thought of Marchfeldt and of the days of dawning passion, and felt that he would now have bartered a life but for one fugitive expression of that love he had so brutally thrown away, and trampled under foot.

"You once loved me, Louisa—did you not?"

"I believe so."

"You believe so," echoed he, groaning deeply: "do you only believe so? Then you have forgotten to be *sure* of it! Yet I remember it, Louisa," and striking his forehead violently—"Oh! that I did not! That remembrance is my sole torture! But tell me, I conjure thee, tell me, is there nothing left? Is every spark extinct? —You loved me dearly once, Louisa—

something, something remains—I know it does!"

"I believe not, Wolfsteïn," said she, with a cold inanimate smile.

"Unfeeling, barbarous woman! Hast thou been to the inquisition, and learned to drop the slow cold drop on the brain of thy victim?"

"What mean you, Wolfsteïn? Heaven knows I would not torture you!—But you cannot for a moment imagine that love survives? I will never, never deceive you!"

"But you *shall* deceive me, madam," he cried, in a sudden access of fury, "you shall feign love though you feel it not!—But this is folly," said he, sinking into a calm: "I once thought this world held nothing unattainable, but now I know my error;—my wife, the creature of my will, a being so fragile as one stamp of my foot or one determined grasp could crumble into atoms, can close her heart against me! I have talked with Ca-

simir, Louisa,—he has been telling me his dreams—and what think'st thou? They are almost as gay as thy waking meditations," and he took up the paper on which a funeral procession was slightly sketched. "His fancy, like thine, is full of tombs and shrowds and epitaphs—but how is this? I thought this moment that death could hardly freeze thy cheek into colder whiteness, and now—now it is all spread over with vermillion!—Nay, never heed—there is nothing to be discovered—the blush has told no secrets!—Vallensteïn has besought me to let him share thy grave—It is a foolish frolic, is it not? What sayest thou, Louisa?"

She was silent.

"I could half wish," said he, musing, "ye had been long since united—yet then—Well, there is no unwishing time! We shall soon see the goal, and thou knowest *que la fin couronne les œuvres.*"

Such were the interviews of this unhappy husband and wife. In the period

that elapsed from the day on which Wolfsteïn received the letter of Devereux, to a few days subsequent to the arrival of that which brought him a hint of the designs of the Inquisition, many similar scenes had occurred. Louisa endured them with cold patience, and Wolfsteïn repeated them with perseverance.

One evening, a soldier put into the hands of Pandulfo a twisted billet, which he said, as he stood sentinel at an outpost, a stranger had given him to deliver, and who then immediately returned to a boat which lay against the beach.

Pandulfo with great emotion read as follows:

"If the commandant of Lornberg castle can, for a few hours, confide his trust to another, and repair to the Cervo Bianco, he will there find one who can furnish him with tidings of his long deserted family; and from whom he may, if any natural yearnings still cleave to his alienated heart, learn all that may be known

of the fate of his once dear brother Julian."

"Julian! Julian!" cried he, excessively agitated, "art thou still living? Is this no illusion? Alienated! No, my brother, I would fly to the world's limit to embrace thee!"

"Captain," said the soldier, "that paper, it seems, makes you very happy—but, if it be to lure you from the castle, I would I might prevail with you to be cautious! As for the man who gave me that letter, he was so quick that I know not what he resembled; but those who waited for him in the boat had an ill look with them; one of them I am sure I have seen before, and, or I misjudge him, he is as adroit with his stiletto as any man in Venice."

Pandulfo, absorbed in the idea that a brother long imagined dead was thus almost miraculously restored to him, treated all Vasco's remonstrances with indifference—on re-examining the letter, he

perceived the words "Come alone;" alone therefore he resolved to go, and alone he went, having deputed an officer named Alexis to be his substitute till noon the following day.

CHAPTER XIII.

> "Adieu! Je vais dans ce pays
> D'où ne revint point feu mon pere:
> Pour jamais adieu, mes amis,
> Qui ne me regretterez guere." *Voltaire.*

SCHARAFFA had for some days been indefatigable in his attentions to the subalterns and soldiers of Lornberg; he had especially applied himself to pouring into their ears insinuations of the severity and despotism of their commandant; hinting, that even the lord of the castle was insulted by his haughty, fractious spirit, and restrained in many an instance of favour and indulgence with which it was his desire to reward and encourage his garrison; in short, that his removal from the command would release both them and their true master from Egyptian bondage, as

it would be Wolfstein's first care to give them a captain, who would relax that rigorous discipline in which they had been so heartlessly held, for the mere gratification of a tyrannical spirit.—Some of the most flexible and ductile amongst them lent a willing ear; others affected to do so, and a few sullenly and decisively repulsed the suggestions, although accompanied by golden persuasion. Scharaffa, till lately, had been known only to the soldiery as a malignant, hateful being, a rejoicer in human suffering, and one who was ever on the alert to stimulate punishment, and ever eager to witness it: that his nature, therefore, should thus suddenly become mild and conciliating, struck even the most blunt-witted among them as a strange paradox. But there are, who may be bought if they cannot be convinced, and it would have been wonderful if amongst a set of men, whose lives had been one scene of desperate adventure, all had proved inaccessible to the sub-

stantial part of Scharaffa's argument. Alexis, who was one of the converts of Felix, saw and heard that all was not right, and was proportionably strict in his orders and vigilant in his observation. A letter brought to the barbican, and there left as the first had been, was received by Scharaffa for his master, and aware as he was of the moody, wild, capricious humour that had lately seized on Wolfstein, he resolved to secure the contents of this critical billet, lest they might be withheld from him;—he read, and as much dismay followed the perusal as it was possible his long practised mind could experience: he saw the hour of safety rapidly escaping, and his thoughts fell into momentary confusion.

"Will it," pondered he, "avail aught that he should read it likewise? We may try at least; it *may* arouse him from his apathy, and that incomparable acuteness which ever defied surprise *may* revive

to assist us:—at all events I must not lose time—if *he* will not act, *I* must!"

He flew to Wolfsteïn, whom he found; his cloak wrapped round him, his plumed cap hanging over his brow, his head drooping, and his arms tightly folded over his bosom, pacing the corridor like a troubled spirit.

"Ah, Scharaffa!" said he, with a ghastly smile, "what bringest thou?"

"That which I hope, my lord, will operate like the blowing of a bugle in your ear, and start you from this fatal stupor," and he presented him the letter —"Is it not time to awake?" inquired he, as he perceived Wolfsteïn, having ran his eye over the paper, crush it together without the smallest visible emotion.

"It will soon be time to sleep," was the reply.

"What!" cried Scharaffa, "do you abandon yourself to despair? Is this the self-relying, philosophic Wolfsteïn?"

"Peace, good Scharaffa, peace! All

things have a crisis, and mine and thine is come!" He burst into a horrible laugh. "Nay, do not be frightened, Scharaffa; we have seen all but the end—Hast thou no curiosity?"

"Maniac!" cried Scharaffa, gnashing his teeth, and rushing from him to make such preparations against surprise as his active spirit suggested to him. Bad as he was, he had an invincible notion of the reliance which might be reposed in the good. "It will be better," thought he, "to confide the truth at once to Alexis, and throw ourselves on his fidelity and courage: if he once pledges himself, he will die in defence of his trust."

With this well founded notion he sought the temporary commandant in the castle court, and disclosed to him briefly the terrible fact, that a body of troops sent by the Inquisition were employed to seize Wolfstein and all his adherents.

"When the attack will be made, and whether force or stratagem will be em-

ployed, I know not; but, from this moment I do know that all security is at an end,—in our brave garrison lies our whole dependence."

Alexis mused:—"I would Pandulfo were here!"

"Nay, Alexis, if thy affections are right, thou art sufficient."

"Well, Scharaffa, I would willingly have defended him, whose pay I receive, from any power save that of the holy church:—but since he has made our holy mother his enemy, and since it has come thus suddenly upon us,—why, I will not desert the man who trusts me, in his extremity,—though I would fain have another foe to face."

"Gallantly, loyally resolved."

"I will go man the ramparts and secure the outposts:—but hearken, Scharaffa!—Beware how you impart to the men the nature of the peril!—A few *must* be trusted, but I can best select them;—

besides, they who act ignorantly, will not be involved in the *crime* of this defence."

Scharaffa could have dispensed with the concluding observation, but he saw that Alexis was bent on performing his duty as the servant of Wolfsteïn and captain of his garrison, and therefore took leisure to provide without farther delay for his own personal escape. He went to examine a subterranean path, which led from the ci-devant chapel to the back of the mountain, and to which, in his misgiving moments, he had often mentally referred as his chance of evasion.

Wolfsteïn, delivered from the importunities of his now detested satellite, took a few more turns along the corridor, and then, stopping at a small chamber near his own, called, "Rolfo! Rolfo!" and forth came a dwarfish ideot boy, on whom, to the surprise of all the inhabitants of the castle, he had for some days amused himself with lavishing the most extravagant caresses. This little monster

was the offspring of Scharaffa, an epitome of his hideous sire; but his mind was merely that of a mischievous ape—He had been from his birth an object of contempt and abhorrence, and had known nothing but cruelty and neglect;—from the presence of his father he always fled in terror, since from him he ever experienced a double measure of ill-treatment, and was not unfrequently threatened by him to be hurled from the ramparts or starved to death in one of the vaults of the castle;—he had acquired therefore a hatred of every human creature, but especially for the author of his being. The gentleness, the sweetmeats, and the toys of Wolfsteïn had their effect on this forlorn, despised outcast, who now came rushing forth at the sound of his voice, grinning with delight, while Wolfsteïn patted his huge misshapen head, stroked his coarse matted hair, and, taking him by the hand, led him down a narrow staircase to the vaults of the castle, on the side towards the sea.

Here he gave him certain instructions with a distinctness and precision fitted to impress even his intellect: they were indeed merely the repetition of an exercise which had been daily rehearsed between them.

"And now, Rolfo, my boy Rolfo," said he, "if you do as I have shown you the moment you hear the horn thrice blown,—you shall have this,—and this," pointing to the glittering star of an order which adorned his breast, and his splendid sabre. "And this too?" said the little monster, touching the horn which hung from Wolfsteïn's neck, and which he loved for its noise.

"Ay, and this too, only don't stir till you hear it sound thrice—and then, my boy Rolfo, don't forget! Do as I have bidden you!"

The boy, with his finger on his chin, kept muttering his instructions to himself: Wolfsteïn had so trained him to his purpose, that he harboured small doubt of him, and having left a feast of confec-

tionary, he retook his way to the habitable part of the castle. As he approached his wife's apartments, he deliberately took from his vest a box of opium, which had been a present from the Grand Seignor, and possessed extraordinary potency.—This eastern habit had of late crept on him, or, rather, had been adopted by him, since he had imbibed the notion that his history approached its denouement; for there had been a time, when Wolfsteïn could not have been surprised into any propensity, which his reason informed him was destructive of the intellectual powers; and nothing could exceed in calmness and deliberation the despair of this man. He swallowed a large pill, and opened the door of his wife's chamber.—It was a lovely autumnal evening, and Louisa was, as usual, engaged with her pencil.—He approached her with somewhat boisterous gaiety.

"Psha!" said he, taking up the sketch, whereon he found her intent, "how in-

herent is the perverseness of woman! Till this evening, your fancy has been ranging death's dominions, and nothing would amuse you save the things which appertain to his grim majesty.—What! tired of the shrowd and the grave, and the pick-axe?—That is unlucky!"

"There is something in this evening," said Louisa, "so mild, yet so refreshing,—I know not how it feels—but life does not press so heavily on me as usual, and I do not turn so sick an eye on living things:—*why* it is so I know not, I only know that so it is."

"Indeed!' said Wolfsteïn, "what a froward thing thou art! There is an antisympathy between us—we cannot ponder the same theme at once!—*Now I* have death in my thoughts, and *my* mind will not change! It would be a gay world, would it not, Louisa, with these soft sunny skies, the fair green earth, and these blue glancing waters, if Wolfsteïn were but safe wrapt in marble?—I do believe

that then thou wouldst sing again; nay, and smile, perhaps, and coo like any dove —but, darling, I will provide against such treason. Our wedding was no jest, and thou shalt find it!—Dost thou not, Louisa, admire the providence of some barbaric kings, who, when they depart from the scene where they have glittered out their hour, take with them, on their dark journey, their wives, their ministers, nay, their very horses and falcons? It is a magnificent thought. Those wives and those ministers might have feasted at the funeral!—What is there in the grave, Louisa?—Is there any thing but dust and worms?"

"Art thou disposed, Wolfsteïn, to inquire what is beyond it?—If thou art, I will call the pious Felix, and he shall tell thee."

"No, no, Louisa! It is too late to ask, and he is a mere dreamer! I but resemble the man, who, on the eve of a distant journey, glances over the map of the country

whither he is bent:—but, for the grave, I know it is a hole in the earth where the material form moulders—and, for our sentient part, I do suppose it is absorbed in the element from whence it emanates —that which is passion or thought in us, why it evaporates and regains its original source:—this is philosophy—the babbling of an old Friar will never confute it!"

"I cannot prevent your thinking thus, Wolfsteïn;—but I *know* that what now lives to suffer, will live to smile on this brief conflict in another world:—it is therefore I love to gaze on yon blue firmament, and to let my thoughts climb far, far beyond it!"

"Well, well," said Wolfsteïn, impatiently, "to-morrow, by this time, these matters will be past dispute, and the whole affair settled!"

As he spoke, a tumult was heard in a distant part of the castle:—a domestic, with a countenance of terror, looked hastily into the apartment, crying,

"Oh, my Lord, we are betrayed!" and disappeared.

Wolfstein's eyes sparkled—"Now, then!" he exclaimed, "now for the thunderbolt! One kiss, Louisa!—This is our second marriage!"

He folded her in a long and earnest embrace, then throwing her from him, rushed from the apartment.

We will now pursue the footsteps of Pandulfo, as we flatter ourselves he has acquired sufficient interest with the reader, to rescue his fate from indifference.—Arrived at the piazza, where stood the inn in which he hoped his long lost brother, Julian, awaited him, and as he walked hastily along a colonnade, he was surprised by the sound of footsteps, treading so closely upon him, that he could hardly attribute such near pursuit to accident, and the thought of Vasco's warning instantaneously darted through his mind, in spite of the bright sunshine which surrounded him. As, laying his hand on his

sabre, he turned to eye the intruders, for there were two, a cloak was flung over his head by one, while the other disarmed him. It was the work of a moment; but when he was thus hoodwinked, and already felt, by anticipation, the cold steel in his bosom, a well-known voice uttered the following words:

"Courage, Signor Capitano! What! Know you not the trick of an old comrade? Submit to our guidance, and you are safe—no injury shall befall you!"—The voice was that of Rufo, but Pandulfo knew his old comrade to be a desperate assassin, and was not much re-assured by the recognition. He permitted himself, however, since there was no alternative, to be led whithersoever they would, and became quickly conscious, from the fœtid closeness of the air, that he had quitted the open strada. It seemed to him that he was led through a house, or some kind of building, into a court-yard, which having crossed, he was made

to descend a long flight of damp, broken, unequal steps, which brought him to a narrow winding passage, where two could not walk abreast, and the voice of his friend Rufo, who followed him close, bade him proceed fearlessly, since he could not go wrong, and they should soon arrive at the goal.—It was not long ere they were impeded by the termination of the passage, and Rufo having given three loud hems, a door opened and admitted them. Pandulfo, as they led him forward, perceived that he was in the midst of a lighted apartment, from the warmth and fragrance of innumerable perfumed tapers, and presently he was set at liberty from the cloak which had been bound tight over his eyes. Several men, of no very prepossessing aspect, were seated round a table, in the centre of this subterranean chamber. He who sate at the upper end invited him to advance, and mildly requested him to look on a young man who stood by the table heavily fettered.

"Of course," Signor Pandulfo, said he, "you behold features familiar to you—your heart yearns towards him, does it not?"

"Your question perplexes me, sir: I have never, to my knowledge, looked on those features till this moment."

"Then you do not recognize the lineaments of your beloved brother, Julian? Instinct is strangely wanting in your bosom, methinks!"

"It is ten years since Julian's shipwreck:—he was then but eighteen; but his traits are deeply impressed on my remembrance—he was a tall, dark, handsome youth.—That is no Julian."

"Yet this man's hand penned the invitation which allured you to the Cervo Bianco, nor was it altogether on a false pretence, for, had we not interfered between him and his purpose, his stiletto would, ere this, have united you with your brother in another world.—Have you

any guess how you have incurred the enmity of this man?"

"None—I never saw him before."

"Can you guess at his employers?"

Pandulfo paused:—"One," said he, "who has indiscriminately injured many, may look for sudden vengeance—and one who associates with villains, need not be surprised at treachery."

"Well, captain," said his principal interrogator,—"run your eye over that billet:—it may enlighten you for the present, and prompt you for the future."

It was from Scharaffa to the prisoner, whom he called Veraldi, informing him that Wolfsteïn had occasion for his services, to rid him of Pandulfo, inclosing a sketch of the false letter from Julian, and directing him to transcribe and send it to the commandant of Lornberg, who would assuredly fall into the snare, and concluding with the promise of an enormous reward

when the deed of blood should be perpetrated.

"Now," said the person, who had from the first addressed Pandulfo, "to your deliverance, and our advantage, this paper fell into our possession; for Veraldi's hand is stronger than his brain, and having copied the contents he forgot to destroy the witness—we have saved you from your perfidious enemies, and revealed them to you. You may be grateful."

"Name the means."

"Introduce us within the castle of Lornberg, and confirm the garrison in passive obedience to whatever measures we adopt."

"Who, and what are ye? And for what purpose would ye obtain admission into the castle of Lornberg?".

"We are not much accustomed to be interrogated, friend—nevertheless, thou shalt be indulged," and pointing to a large crucifix, he said, "Under this sign

we go forth?—We are the servants and ministers of the holy church. We *can* perform our mission without thy aid, but thou mayest facilitate our task, at the same time obtain absolution for the violence and error of thy past life, and sanctify an act of just vengeance."

Pandulfo, whose devotion had acquired a timorous character from the reproaches of a laden conscience, threw himself at the feet of the inquisitor, and bound himself to do his bidding, with a compromise that all the less hardened of the soldiery, all, who with himself, had relented at the admonitions of Father Felix, should depart unharmed. All was quickly agreed between them, and Pandulfo was now instructed how the fortunes of Wolfsteïn had been led to this dangerous crisis: Rufo, when with Zanina he fled from the castle, was boiling over with wrath and malice against his late master—he remembered his insult, and, though a fortunate competitor in his amours, still

hated him as a rival. Besides, he could not without trembling reflect on the innumerable stilettos which gleamed around his path, and although by him unseen, threatened him, he doubted not, on all sides; nor was his peril less imminent from the stroke of justice than from that of revenge:—whichever way he looked, a sanguinary and hideous doom threatened to abridge his days, and unable to bear the distracting influence of perpetual terror, he resolved to purchase his security by a full disclosure of all the transactions of Wolfsteïn to which he had been privy. The Lord of Lornberg had for a series of years enjoyed the protection and connivance of the Holy Office, through various secret services he had rendered them, and through his alliance with the capuchin Father Joseph, and Fieramosca, both of whom were inquisitors;—but Wolfsteïn, by no uncommon mistake, while he looked on them as his agents, was in fact their instrument, and now,

that not only he was no longer serviceable but might become troublesome, they had no other sentiment with regard to him than his destruction. Rufo furnished them with ample materials for the accomplishment of their end, received in return a full and sufficient absolution, and was now a pensioned, privileged, secure villain, the blood-hound of the Inquisition.

The enterprise was agreed on for the following evening, and Pandulfo, who possessed a master key, which opened to him every inlet to the castle, proposed to land the inquisitors and their troops during the darkness of the coming night, and carry them into a little bay far to the back of the castle, where he knew how to conceal them till the proper moment for action.

We left Scharaffa on his way through the subterranean passage leading from the chapel, a sabre hung at his side, his loaded pistols were in his belt, he carried

a dark lantern, without the aid of which he could not have explored his way across these dismal vaults, and his person was nearly weighed down by the quantity of jewels and other valuables wherewith he had encumbered his flight—he turned his dark lantern slowly round, for the vaulted apartments were wide and dreary, and the light he bore discovered only a small part of their extent.—It seemed to him, as if some one whispered near him, —he stopped—

"No," said he, "it was the echo of my own footsteps!—Now, Wolfsteïn, take care of thyself!" he exclaimed, as setting down the lantern, he placed the key in the low heavy door, "for this moment divides our fortunes for ever!"

As he spoke, three or four men seized him, and thrusting a handkerchief in his mouth, secured his silence.

"What," said Pandulfo, "art thou even deserting him! Nay then, I forgive thee thy good will to me, for since thou art

all devil, it were mere folly to upbraid thee!"

Then taking up the lantern, and leaving Scharaffa in secure hands, he crossed the vaults, and presenting himself in the castle court, was most joyfully hailed by Alexis and the garrison: he found that his trusty substitute was preparing to make every disposition of a loyal and skilful commandant against a perilous crisis; the posts were secured, the ramparts manned, the artillery mounted, and in short all seemed in order to cope with violence, or to counteract fraud. Pandulfo took Alexis by the arm, and, in a few brief sentences, made him acquainted with the events which had followed his departure from the castle, assailing him with such reasons as determined him to remain neuter through whatever conflict the capture of Wolfsteïn might occasion. With as much expedition as possible, an order was circulated among the men to keep their several posts quietly, and with-

out taking any active part in the events which were about to happen, and having taken all possible precaution that no resistance should be offered to the troops of the Holy Office, Pandulfo could not forbear flying to the apartments of Madame de Wolfsteïn, whom, in hurried accents, for it was now time to act, he besought not to be alarmed whatever unusual agitation might prevail in the castle, and having reiterated his charge, most earnestly to this effect, he returned to the chapel. As he entered the apartment of Madame de Wolfsteïn, the Lord of Lornberg rushed from it, and, passing rapidly along the corridor, ascended some steps which led to the ramparts: he did not regard Pandulfo with any surprise, and the latter, feeling only that his enemy was on the brink of ruin, passed him without defiance or upbraiding, either verbal or tacit.

Louisa, who from the wild and emphatic adieu of her spouse, and the friendly warning of Pandulfo, could not doubt that

some critical moment was at hand, taking Barbara with her, entered her oriel, where she found father Felix, and, prostrate at the foot of the crucifix, they resigned themselves to the decree of heaven.

As Pandulfo hastened to rejoin the inquisitors, he found the cause of Wolfstein's hasty retreat from his wife's apartment; the troops stationed at the back of the castle, and close to the lower gate, having become careless from security, had been discovered, the domestics were alarmed, and general consternation prevailed.—The commandant exclaimed to the terrified menials as he took his way—"Only be passive, and fear not! But beware how ye resist the Holy Inquisition!"

On regaining the vaulted chambers, he explained the arrangements he had made, and all being now ready, and the assailants assured of non-resistance, a small body of troops, conducted by Kuno, who solicited the office, and bearing with them the chained tyger Scharaffa, penetrate

into the castle.—In the meanwhile, the principal inquisitor presented three pilgrims to Pandulfo.

"These men," said he, "were found lurking about by some of my soldiers, who secured and brought them hither—they demand the son of the late Duke of Friedland, in the name of the Emperor, whose warrant they bear.—Conduct them to him; it will be a less revolting task than a personal participation in the capture of thy master."

Gladly Pandulfo accepted the alternative, for never before had he felt so like a coward; his heart beat, and his knees smote each other, and as he turned to that division of the castle where Casimir lay, he could not forbear casting back a glance of horror towards the steps, which he had seen the wicked, but now unfortunate Wolfsteïn ascend.

It happened, that on the bastion where Wolfsteïn stood like a statue, with his eyes

fixed on the waves of the Adriatic, were stationed, among others, Bruno and Zastrow, the trusty myrmidons of Rufo, and they broke forth into audible expressions of joy at the sight of this favourite leader. Wolfsteïn turned slowly at the sound—

"Ah! Rufo," said he, "this s a gay moment for thee, is it not? Thou art an excellent fellow! Thou art returned to thy old master, never more to part! But what is this,—Scharaffa! Has Satan abandoned thee? Has he delivered up his foster brother to durance?—I could not have thought it of him;—but we will be even with him yet—doubt it not."

"There are, however, more of the family of his infernalissimo," said Rufo, eying him with malicious triumph, "who must be content to share the bondage of Scharaffa."

"I understand thee, my friend Rufo," replied Wolfsteïn, with a most deliberate and unperturbed manner—"Thou art

civilly hinting at thy commission, and I will not compel thee to the use of blunter terms."

"Here!" said he coolly, taking his pistols from his belt, while all around beheld the action with mistrust, and stood fearfully on their guard; but he speedily relieved them by presenting the pistols, with the butt end, to Rufo, and in like manner he unfastened the belt of his sabre, and made a voluntary surrender of it, nor did he even retain his dagger. All stood gazing on him in astonishment—to cowardice they could not well impute an action which was performed with every appearance of indifference and intrepidity; his hand was steady, and not the smallest hurry or emotion was evinced, either in word or deed; neither could his submission be attributed to repentance, or to awe of the power into whose terrible hands he had fallen; for a wild sneer dwelt, during the whole transaction, on his countenance, and his speech bore the stamp of irony.

"I do not like him," whispered Rufo to Zastrow; "he has something in his head, and, if I mistake not, he has yet arms about him."

The quick ear of Wolfsteïn caught the whisper.

"Search me!" said he; "I conjure you, stand on no ceremony."

The Inquisitor, who accompanied Rufo, now interfered—"The Chevalier," he observed, "has been unusually submissive, which shall be remembered in his favour. Let him declare on his honour that he conceals no weapon about his person, and we will forego the search."

Wolfsteïn sarcastically invited and urged them to convince themselves.

"For," said he, "when, as Rufo is conscious, I look as I do now, I am dangerous—you should not trust me! Now, here, for instance," and he lifted the bugle-horn which hung at his neck, "I have read of a fellow who destroyed a whole squadron of enemies with a weapon scarcely so effective to appear-

ance as this—why not secure it? It *may* prove as murderous as the jaw-bone of an ass!"

There was something inexpressibly provoking in the contumelious apathy with which, even at the stake, Wolfstein taunted those who baited him.

"Let us secure him at once," said Rufo; "I hate his sneers."

"I believe," replied the Inquisitor, "it will suffice to fasten his arms lightly, till we have conducted him below; he cannot escape us in our descent down the narrow stairs, even were he more refractory than he seems inclined to be, and farther bondage would only impede our conveyance of him from hence."

"As you will," said Rufo; "but I know him better than you do, and, in spite of his jesting, I would take that horn from him: he is so stored with contrivances, there is no being too cautious."

Wolfsteïn, with affected readiness,

slipt from his neck the string on which it hung, and was presenting it, as he had done his weapons, when, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he paused, and said,

" And yet, ere ye deprive me of my sweet bugle, let me once more—once, for the last time, listen to its echo over the waves."

" Is it possible," asked the Inquisitor, " that its sound may act as a signal, and bring any of his freebooters to his rescue? Can he have any motive save the one he alleges for blowing his bugle?"

" None whatever," said Scharaffa.

" None, none!" echoed Zastrow and Bruno.

" Wind your bugle, then," said the Inquisitor, " and come with us."

" Yes," replied Wolfstein, " three farewell blasts—and afterwards—afterwards!—What a fine sunset it is! Do you all mark it well? I marvel if it will set as red to-morrow!"

" Come, blow, blow, Chevalier!" cried

Rufo, impatiently: " let to-morrow take its chance!"

" Spoken like an oracle!" said Wolfstein, lifting the horn to his lips, and blowing a loud blast: " you hear the echo? Hark! how it dies along the waves!"

Again he blew.

" Now," said he, preparing for his third blast, " the effect of this last echo will astonish ye all—mark!"

The bugle was still at his lips, when, with an explosion that seemed to rend the world, the bastion on which they stood was hurled high in the air; all for a moment was uproar, dust, darkness, and chaos: a large portion of the castle was riven from its foundation and flung into the sea, and the Lord of Lornberg, attended by a multitude of unprepared souls, was plunged deep beneath the waves of the Adriatic.

CHAPTER XIV.

" If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?"

Pope.

Wolfsteïn had always considered that his choice lay between two alternatives, success, either present or prospective, or death, (i. e.) annihilation. Why a man should consent to continue breathing in a degraded and fallen state, " when he himself might his quietus make with a bare bodkin," was a question which, as he believed in no religion, save that of Nicolo Machiavelli, whose dogmas he had devoutly studied, and zealously reduced to practice, he did not waste his time in discussing. He had found himself alive and conscious in the midst of many

beings, outwardly resembling himself, but for whom the intelligence or the chance which had created him had not endued him with one spark of sympathy or affection: his intellect, which was powerful, told him, that since these resembling beings in no way awakened his love, or contributed to his pleasure, in short, that he delighted not in them, they might, at least, be rendered subservient to his use. Early, therefore, he became a subtle and infallible analyst, and as a skilful chemist, neglecting the gay or fragrant plants, the boast of Flora's train, would select for his purposes the hemlock, the poppy, or the ominous nightshade; so would Wolfsteïn extract from the hearts and brains of those from whom other men would turn with dread and abhorrence, such deadly virtues as might assist in corroborating those possessed by himself, and in rendering them more intense and subtle. He was well aware of the penalties annexed to such associations, and it was

after mature and deliberate calculation that his election was made. "Men," thought he, "at the best, are weak, wavering, fickle, liable to eternal fluctuation of mind or circumstance; if, with good faith and simple integrity, believed in and believing, you identify your interests with any of them, ten thousand to one but some chance, or inconsistency, or fraud, perhaps, for there are fewer honest men than honest men deem, breaks the pious league, and then the cheated fool stands staring on his blighted views, with nothing to curse save his own folly! Now, I know my men, and they know me—I know that my associates are dissembling, treacherous, deadly—I know that only one hook will hold them, and I trust to no other; thus saving myself a weary parade of seemings, and following the bias of my own nature by the light of my own reason. Assured that my agents would ruin me, if their interest prompted them to

the deed, no tie withholds me from anticipating them whenever they become troublesome, dangerous, or useless; for the imaginary incumbrances of gratitude or conscience are unknown amongst us." A resolved penetrating mind, and a robust, well-tempered, and active physique, lent their combined strength to the powerful bias of this bad nature, and operated to form a most extraordinary result. It is useless to dilate farther on Wolfsteïn's theories, as we trust his life and its termination form a comment sufficiently illustrative. On the fall and death of the elder Vallensteïn, he had grounded the most splendid hopes of prosperity and aggrandisement, nor was there ought romantic in the speculation; but here the interest of his fellow villains warred with his;—his share, from the magnitude of his services, must of necessity have been a large one, and the plunder would have been thereby considerably diminished for the other claimants. This

alone was reason sufficient to determine his fate, but it had many concomitants, for Wolfsteïn was no negative character, and those, whose colleague he had been, knew that every moment of his existence was perilous to theirs from the hour when the tie broke between them. The letter of Devereux was the production of several heads, for Wolfsteïn's quondam associates, sensible that their victim was neither mentally nor physically the man he had been, trusted that inflamed with sudden rage he would abandon his caution, seek those by whom he had been circumvented, and personally prefer his claims on the confiscated possessions of the fallen Duke, and thus throw himself into their hands. But, as he quitted not his strong hold, their next alternative was the Inquisition, of whom, by being their useful agent, he had hitherto purchased impunity, but who had carefully treasured a long black list of crimes against the hour of need. The deep

concentrated fury with which Wolfsteïn first perused the letter of Devereux soon subsided, and he relapsed into his usual habit of reasoning.

"Well," said he to himself, "the thing is simple enough—I have lost the game; yet I staked high and played skilfully—*n'importe*, let us pay the forfeit! What is more absurd than to see a losing gamester gnashing his teeth, stamping on the dice, and amusing the spectators with his impotent rage, as if he had not foreseen, that when two play, the chance of success may fall on the adversary. For my part, since I have lost, I will lose like Wolfsteïn—*ma fin couronnera mes œuvres!*"

The warning he received from some friendly hand of the terrible visitors who would shortly seek him at Lornberg, he disregarded, because he had bent up all his faculties for whatsoever might happen. The louder the storm raved, the more the clouds lowered and blackened

around him, the more desperate his circumstances, the more signal his ruin; the more dignity would be added to the fearful catastrophe for which he was deliberately preparing, and he laughed in his heart at the perplexity and dismay of his grim agent Scharaffa. Wearied of life, and satisfied, to use his own phrase, that his game was lost, he looked to the end with a hard and moody satisfaction, and there existed on earth but one temptation which could have diverted him from the grand *coup de theatre* he meditated—the hope of recovering the affection of his unhappy wife. He convinced himself that was impossible. Well then, all that remained for him, was to secure her from ever bestowing on another that which was unattainable by him; therefore he so ordered his operations, that one doom might overwhelm himself, his wife, and his rival; how many others was a matter of total indifference. Such a plan, to such a mind,

was not very difficult to arrange—the choice of an agent was his sole obstacle, on which, while he pondered, the deformed idiot offspring of Scharaffa, as if sent by some fatality across his path, stood before him. From that moment he took the shapeless, mindless imp to his apartment, and, except during his visits to Louisa or Count Vallensteïn, never lost sight of him. Having by dint of persevering caresses, by toys and sweetmeats, won from him a sort of brute fondness, he led him daily and regularly into the vaulted passages which communicated beneath the whole extent of the castle; he constantly laid a train of some harmless combustible powder, which, when ignited, would explode with a slight sound. He taught Rolfo the use of the flint and steel, and made him comprehend that he should never set fire to the train till he should hear three blasts of a bugle.

By force of repetition, Rolfo became perfect in his task, and even attached to it. The explosion amused him greatly, and the rewards which never failed to follow, were such as suited his imbecile yet greedy fancy. This daily exercise was continued unremittingly, up to the day on which the deed which it prefigured was destined to take place. Immediately on being apprised by the second warning of his friendly monitor that his foes were even at hand, Wolfsteïn hastened to lay his train. He had by persevering diligence, and with much manual labour, distributed such a portion of gunpowder and other combustibles through the vaults of his castle, as he conceived would rend the whole fabric from its foundation: he placed his unconscious engineer at his fearful post, and, with a feeling of desperate and diabolical triumph, looked to the near approaching crisis,

when one sudden destruction should involve himself, and all with whom his interests were now connected, regretting only, that Devereux, Father Joseph, Fieramosca, &c. were not at that moment his guests.

CHAPTER XV.

"The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet!"

Shakspeare.

Having allowed the shock, the thunder, the smoke, the chaotic confusion of this terrible explosion, to subside into that ghastly calm which succeeds an event of horror, we will proceed fearfully to explore the extent of the ruin which has been effected.—The bastion which more immediately overlooked the gulf of Venice had undergone an almost total disruption from the rest of the massy pile:—it was in this division of the castle that Roffo was stationed, and here the mine took most ample and destructive effect,—here were the festive apartments of Wolfsteïn, his scene of banquet and revelry, and here resided many a light and thoughtless minister of his pleasures.

One thunder clap pealed through it, and all that remained was a black, yawning, hollow shell! At the extremity of this bastion were the chambers of the Lady of Lornberg;—every one of the suite dedicated to her use was involved in the ruin, save only the oriel, where she, with her Confessor and Barbara, were devoutly kneeling before the crucifix, at the moment when the castle was rent in twain. The shock was too sudden and intense to be felt; ere a shudder could creep through their veins, or a shriek escape their lips, they were all stretched unconscious before the holy image at whose feet they knelt, and which, strange to say, was not shaken from its upright position:—the outward wall of this apartment had fallen, so that the still erect crucifix, and the inanimate forms which lay extended around it, were visible from without, though surrounded by dust, smoke, and rubbish, while the spot, which seemed hitherto to have been pre-

served by its sanctity from the destruction which had annihilated the rest of the bastion, was still rocking and tottering from the recent convulsion. The true cause of Wolfsteïn's plan not succeeding in its fullest extent cannot now be ascertained;—that he meant to have involved the whole pile, and all its inhabitants, in one undistinguished ruin, nor have "left a wreck behind" to mark the place where it stood, could not be doubted.—We may hazard a probable guess that the failure was owing to Wolfsteïn's ignorance of military tactics: he had, very likely, erroneously calculated the strength of his fortress, and the quantity of combustible necessary to effect its complete annihilation. However this may be, the sea bastion was the only part of Lornberg castle effectually destroyed, though the whole pile trembled and quivered to its base.

The confusion, the horror, the mistrust of the surviving part of the household, &c.

for some space of time following this awful catastrophe, was inconceivable; the first impulse was flight, for a second shock seemed in every one's expectation and the rocking walls offered but an insecure asylum, since the whole foundation was more or less shaken.

It was Conrade and Pandulfo who first discovered the awful situation of Madame de Wolfstein; their immediate anxiety was to remove her and her companions, without delay, from a chamber, whose rent floor and yawning walls might the next moment have given way beneath them, and where the lightest footsteps might have proved fatal. They did not lose time, therefore, in endeavouring to ascertain their existence, till they had borne them to a place of comparative safety; but, having done so, it was with infinite thankfulness they beheld these most interesting objects of anxiety restored gradually to speech and consciousness, although totally ignorant of the cause of their late insensibility, or

of the bustle and confusion reigning around them. Louisa's joy and surprise at the sight of Conrade was extreme; and that faithful servant, in the midst of the horror such a catastrophe as we have recorded must excite in every human breast, was filled with transport at this providential rescue of the sister of his idolized master.



In the space of one year from the death of Wolfsteïn, Louisa Baroness of Marchfeldt gave her hand to Count Casimir of Vallensteïn; and the castle of Marchfeldt, on the banks of the Raab, became the scene of such domestic felicity as rarely brightens the cloudy history of man. The hearts both of Louisa and Casimir had been severely proved in the fiery ordeal of adversity, and they came brighter from the furnace; their intimate acquaintance with suffering, while it

softened and refined their natures, had strengthened the temper of their minds, and they doubly enjoyed every blessing, contrasting it with the terrible past. Count Vallensteïn, though, from his knowledge of his father's treasonable schemes, he could not resent the conduct adopted by the Emperor; yet so much of that father's memory was dear to his heart, that he could never consent to accept from his imperial majesty any of those personal favours, or honours, which lavishly courted his acceptance. Ambition had been the ruin of his father, and he determined to erect his own happiness on a far different basis. Under his mild rule, the domain of Marchfeldt improved and extended; nor was he less blessed and adored by his vassals than the lineal barons had been before him. He became the father of gallant sons and blooming daughters; and a blessing seemed to hover over his house and territory. Conrade, to whom Bar-

bara committed her happiness, on the same auspicious day which saw the union of their lord and lady, succeeded his father, Sigismond, as Seneschal of Marchfeldt; and Stephen, the husband of our old friend the sapient and garrulous Alice, whose health was now restored, was promoted to be bailiff of the lands immediately surrounding the castle; an office for which his unshaken, sturdy integrity eminently fitted him. Desmond, the manly-hearted devoted Desmond, would not quit his friend; and, as in that frontier station, every feudal baron was necessitated to keep on foot a certain number of troops, and a garrison of no inconsiderable strength, the military department was placed under the charge of Desmond, and admirably fulfilled. Casimir rarely took the field in person, unless some special occasion called him forth; and whenever it was necessary to send a body of Marchfeldters to reinforce the army, he could not have consigned them

to a better substitute than the brave and experienced Desmond.

When Lindau returned to Vienna, with an account of his commission, he could not help feeling in his inmost heart the grateful encomiums of Princess Stolberg. The emotion she betrayed on learning the rescue of Casimir, and her enthusiastic reception of him who had undertaken his deliverance, only revealed how strong a hold her unavailing attachment still maintained in her heart; but gratitude on the one hand, a sense of service on the other, gradually created a mutual sympathy; they insensibly sought each other till they became reciprocally necessary, and friendship softened into love. Princess Stolberg was the first to disclose to Lindau the circumstances which had occurred between herself and Vallensteïn; at the same time surrendering to him the token she had received from that unhappy youth when he had so abruptly quitted Vienna.

"It was the pledge of friendship," said she, blushing; "accept it from me, Frederick, as the sacrifice to a still tenderer sentiment."

As for the Margrave, he had no secret to return, his passion for the Baroness of Marchfeldt having been exhibited for the public amusement, and the whole history of his attendance and dismissal being duly registered in the court annals.

Soon after the Princess Stolberg became Margravine of Lindau, the happy pair were welcome guests at Marchfeldt. For many a succeeding year their friendly visits were repeated; and, in after days, an intermarriage of the offspring of these families cemented the friendship still farther by alliance.

We dare not flatter ourselves that Count Harrach has won for himself much of our reader's sympathy; it will suffice, therefore, to state, with respect to him, that he continued to bow, smile, and flatter through the term of his in-

significant life; no one loved or respected him while he walked upon earth, and he went down to the dust unregretted. Yet Count Harrach had no *vices*, the accusation against him was a mere negative—he had no virtues. His son died before him; and, as he himself had ever looked with shrinking horror towards that period which must separate him from "the warm precincts of the cheerful day," he had forborne the ominous operation of making a written consignment of his earthly possessions, so that they fell, by inheritance, to the son of his once dear and illustrious, but now abhorred and fallen, brother; and Count Vallensteïn of Marchfeldt was indebted to his uncle's pusillanimity for a very considerable addition to his already ample possessions.

Father Felix lived in holy rest and thankfulness, loving and beloved, amongst his flock at Marchfeldt for many years.

He lived to breathe his pious benediction on a young and lovely race, till, at length, he gently and willingly obeyed the summons to the tomb, wept and regretted by many a friend and disciple.

THE END.

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